Birchip P-12 School

Bullying Policy

Bullying and harassment are detrimental to the health of the victim, and both are against the law. On the other hand, acceptance and compassion have definite health benefits.

Working with Victims- Developing Self-Worth and Confidence

- Most children want to find their niche in a group and for a variety of reasons some don’t succeed.
- Sometimes enlisting the help of their friends gives the victim confidence and gives them the feeling that they are not alone.
- Their repertoire of coping strategies needs to be increased so that they can generate solutions to the problem.
- Some students are not effective listeners and observers and therefore lack cues as to how to behave.
- Some students have difficulty making eye contact and thus don’t connect with others. This ability is an especially important quality for young people to have.
- Many victims are poor communicators. Check whether the child can make small talk or carry on a conversation. Effective communicators are rarely picked on because they mix and can defend themselves verbally.
- Body language- shoulders back, a firm handshake.

How Can You Help?

If communication doesn’t come easily, then students should practise slanting. Practising these skills will develop an awareness of how our actions affect those around us.

S  Sit up
L  Lean forward
A  Ask questions
N  Nod your head
T  Talk to people

Look at the modulation of the child’s voice- is it whiny? Is there a smile? A smile goes a long way to making a child accepted.

Some Conditions that may Attract Bullying?
- Does the child have a supportive network of friends?
- Participating in team sports allows children to mix freely, to learn how to work in a team and how to win and lose in an encouraging environment.
- On a few occasions it is personal hygiene that leads to the problem. This can be dealt with in a caring way.
- Sometimes lack of success leads to victimisation.
- Remediation needs to be addressed very early in the child’s schooling. Poor literacy skills often leads to poor self-esteem.
- Students may be picked on if they are over weight.
- Some students are taunted about their sexual and social activities.
- Some students are taunted because of lack of success and even their success.
- All children need practice in empathising. “How would you feel if…?” questions, allow children to put themselves in the position of others.
- Every child needs to find something that he or she is good at and have those successes acknowledged.

Policy ratified by Birchip P-12 School Council on May 24th 2007
Bullying Policy
- A Method of Shared Concern-

The Birchip P-12 School believes that students work best in a harassment free environment.

The aim of the policy is to find a way to co-exist, to modify behaviour, not to make everyone like one another.

Bullying is any behaviour (verbal and physical) which is viewed as: unwelcome, degrading, intrusive, violent, abusive, sexual in nature or generally offensive to a person.

Bullying may include:
- Unwelcome physical contact such as punching, kicking.
- Unwelcome questions about a person’s private life.
- Comments about a person’s sexuality and/or sexual activity.
- Sexual jokes, wolf whistles.
- Graffiti about people.
- Offensive pictures and written materials about people on paper.
- The use of electronic forms to bully may include: emails, blogs, pictures, web pages, text messages, videos, msn.
- Suggestive or offensive comments about a person’s appearance or lifestyle.
- Being excluded from activities.
- Racist, ethnic or religious harassment

The Effects of Bullying
- Lowered self esteem
- Fear
- Stress
- Lack of sleep
- Poor school performance
- Withdrawal from class participation
- Absence from school
- Stomach and headaches
- Reluctance to attend school

Bullying will be dealt with in the following manner:

Stage ONE:
- Hold individual meetings with each student involved.
- Give the bully a positive statement regarding his general behaviour.
- Encourage the bully to empathise about how it might feel to be bullied. Boys in particular are generally not good at empathising. Encourage students to give their version of events.
- Re-interview the victim.
- The victim and the bully should write down their interpretation of the event.
- Talk about what the victim will do if the bullying starts again. The victim has to have faith that the school will support and help him.
- Go over strategies that will improve the victim's projection of himself.
- Look at the nature of the circumstances. If the victim is strong enough and agrees, then a meeting between the two parties is an effective way for the bully to realise how it feels to be victimised. This is done in the presence of a teacher and the emphasis is on feelings rather than blame.

The issue of bullying can also be discussed with the whole class and the specific incident mentioned. Everyone in the group is responsible for a member’s poor behaviour. The teacher should form questions so that there is room to empathise rather than blame.

“[I hear you have been nasty to X, tell me about it.”

Stage TWO:
- Follow up with a meeting at the end of the day. Conduct a further meeting the next day to make sure that there were no repercussions.
- Check the students’ progress.
- Parents of those involved will be notified if bullying persists.
- Make it clear to the bully that these occurrences will be recorded in his file.
- If bullying is severe or prolonged, suspension and expulsion may be the penalty.

If your child is being bullied:
- Make contact as quickly as possible. Students are always appreciative that an adult has dealt with the matter.
- Most find it a relief to share the problem and have it dealt with.
- Encourage your child to seek out a teacher they have a rapport with to discuss the problem.
- Ring the Principal immediately. Do not contact the parents of the bullies or the bully as this will only inflame matters.

Don't wait.
Seek help quickly!

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