

What is bullying?

There are many forms of bullying and many perceptions of what consists of bullying behaviour. It may include: repeatedly physically hurting others, calling people names on a regular basis, speaking in an abusive way about the individual /their family/ past/ race / gender and or /background, threatening another repeatedly in such a way as to upset them and cause them worry and unhappiness. There is usually a repetitive element involved, with the fear that a certain behaviour may be repeated hanging over the victim.

As well as straightforward repeated physical and verbal aggression, bullying may also be more insidious, involving for example the deliberate attempt to isolate a child from their peers which may also involve other members of the class.

Cyber bullying is becoming increasingly common, as for example, in the sending of unkind or inappropriate texts/images.

Who is affected? How is it identified?

The victim of bullying can be anyone at any age and this can change over time. The perpetrator may also be vulnerable. Parents of both may feel affected.

All our staff are alert to the possibility of bullying taking place and can usually identify covert physical bullying/ name calling as it occurs.

Within our classroom culture, in an age-appropriate way, we encourage children to talk individually to the school staff. We encourage a culture of care for others.

Sometimes other unaffected children will bring a bullying matter to the attention of staff or a bullying issue may be raised by children/ staff within PHSE context.

Responses to this can alert staff to deeper-seated bullying issues.

However, bullying is not always so easy to detect, owing to children's fears of the possible consequences of highlighting a bullying issue. Often parents will bring an issue to the attention of the school. The perpetrator and quite possibly their parents/ guardians are also affected by the bullying.

Who is responsible for dealing with it? What agencies are involved?

Every member of staff is responsible for helping to create a school culture which aspires to eradicate bullying and for helping those individuals who experience bullying nonetheless. They are responsible for informing parents of victims and perpetrators and for keeping them up-to-date on progress. They may be responsible for keeping written records of intervention programmes and outcomes, if appropriate.

In some cases, other agencies may be involved (e.g. school nursing, Ed Psych, SEBD team, police, IOM Transport Dept, etc).

In general classroom terms, how is this issue addressed?

Collectively, a bullying-free culture is promoted through the regular teaching/promotion of range of age-appropriate activities within the classroom and during assemblies.

Dealing with bullying is a whole-school issue and the effectiveness of approaches is reviewed regularly, for example at staff meetings.

In specific incidents of bullying, how will the victim and perpetrator be dealt with and the issues be resolved?

Bullying others is specifically against the school rules, in particular, rules 1 and 2, and 10, which stress keeping hands and feet to oneself, and the need to show respect and good manners to all. The overarching ethos of our school is to treat others as we would like to be treated and the rules underline this.

Bullies are choosing to disregard these rules and will meet the same consequences as those who have been identified as having other sorts of behaviour difficulties. The sanctions for breaking rules are set out in detail in our school Behaviour Policy. In the cases of serious and repeated bullying, suspension may be an option (see Behaviour Policy).

We will however, attempt to work with the bully and help them overcome any issues that may be preventing them from curtailing their behaviour. We would certainly wish to have the support and understanding of parents/guardians in this procedure.

The victims of bullying will need sympathy, support and understanding. They need to see that sanctions have been taken. Parents/ guardians will be kept in close contact with the school / class teacher so they are informed about how to best help their child deal with the bullying incidents.