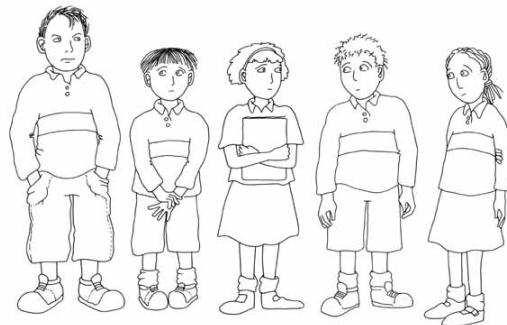


# HAPPY SCHOOLS

## A Whole School Anti-Bullying Policy

Most schools have an anti-bullying policy already.

However, these documents can tend to ‘gather dust’. Even if one exists, a periodic review of it is worthwhile. If there is *no* anti-bullying policy, or if it seems out of date, the following is a simple four step guide to producing one and dealing with the problem.



### Step 1: Define the problem

The research accompanying this educational resource package gives multiple definitions of bullying. At the minimum, it is important to note that

Bullying involves the *deliberate* and *repeated* actions of one or more students with relatively *more power* designed to *harm* another student (or students) with *less power*.

Bullying can involve boys or girls, and can include three major variants:

- Physical bullying
- Verbal bullying
- Psychological bullying

It may happen in the classroom or in the playground, as well as on the way to school.

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### Step 2: Assert the school's attitude towards bullying

The school needs to assert as a matter of policy that bullying is not acceptable. The usual way to do this is to assert the principle that

**Every student has the right to feel free and happy in the school.**

and that

**Bullying produces short or long-term harm to the child bullied. It is a serious form of abuse which is not acceptable.**

This policy statement must be declared publicly, and widely publicised for all students, teachers and parents.



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### Step 3: Enlist the support of all members of the school community

A whole school approach to bullying is – the research makes clear – the only successful way to tackle the problem. This means that that all three major sections of the school community must all be involved, and acknowledge their responsibility:

Teachers must

- treat evidence or reports of bullying seriously
- take action both individually and in conjunction with the school authorities to protect the victim and deal with the bully/bullies
- act as role models themselves of compassionate and tolerant behaviour

Parents must

- listen to and treat seriously reports by their children of bullying
- take up bullying cases with the relevant school authority
- support the school in dealing with the problem

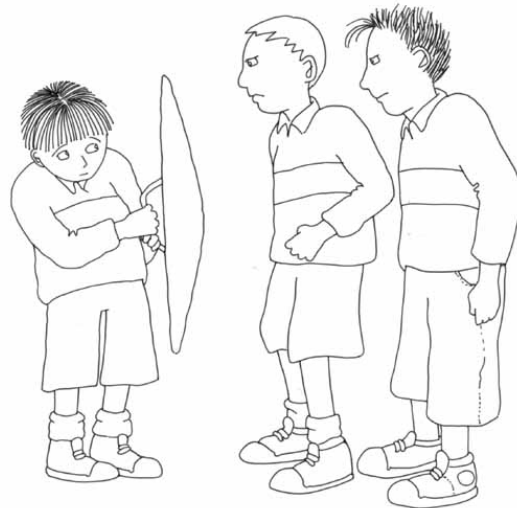
Students must

- treat bullying as a serious matter
- report it immediately to teachers and/or parents
- always act as ‘friends’ to other students.



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### Step 4: Develop a series of strategies to combat bullying

This educational package has much to offer in terms of ‘consciousness raising’ about the problem of bullying. Some of these resources, or other equivalent resources, should be used to focus students on the problem and model good responses to bullying.

As much as possible should be done to motivate ‘bystanders’ to stand up for the rights of victims, and try to curb the actions of bullies.

The school staff must also develop a series of ‘models of response’ to bullying incidents. They may choose to adopt the recommended strategies of this package, the **No Blame** ‘Shared concern’ method and the ‘Support group’ method, or may develop their own strategies.

# HAPPY SCHOOLS

## A Whole School Anti-Bullying Policy

There should also be an agreed set of procedures, such as

- Keeping records of all reported bullying incidents
- Setting a series of graduated responses, from ‘counselling’ by a class teacher, through to an interview with parents and the principal, or even referring to an outside expert – (depending on the severity of the case and how often the bullying behaviour has been repeated)
- Documenting what has been done to help the victim
- Documenting what has been done to assist the bully to improve his/her behaviour
- Quantification of the problem *before* a whole school policy campaign
- Evaluation of the problem *after* the campaign

These four steps represent the key elements in a whole school anti-bullying strategy. It is important to adhere to all four, and to document each carefully.

With a strong anti-bullying policy, the problem can be minimised, if not eliminated. Vigilance and periodic reviews however are ongoing priorities.

