



Ógras

Ant-Bullying Policy

Mission Statement

Our vision is an Ireland where young Irish speakers have the confidence and ability to reach their potential and participate in society through the medium of Irish and where they have a broad understanding of the Irish Culture and Heritage

Anti-Bullying Policy

This response to bullying is an integral part of Ógras' child protection programmes and promotes a positive and safe climate within our organisation. A whole organisation approach aims to create a supportive environment where it is not acceptable to bully and where the ethos of the organisation is that it is 'ok to tell'. In creating this type of environment, the cycle of silence in relation to bullying can be broken.

Bullying Defined

'Bullying can be defined as repeated aggression be it verbal, psychological or physical which is conducted by an individual or group against others. It is behaviour, which is intentionally aggravating and intimidating and occurs mainly among children in social environments. It includes behaviours such as teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting or extortion by one or more pupils against a victim. The more extreme forms of bullying behaviour, when perpetrated by adults rather than children, would be regarded as physical or emotional abuse. However other major forms of child abuse such as neglect and sexual abuse are not normally comprehended by the term bullying. (Children First; 1999)

The following are some of the types of bullying that can occur amongst young people

Physical aggression: This behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While pupils often engage in 'mess fights', they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.

- **Intimidation:** Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation: it may be based on the use of very aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon. Particularly upsetting can be a facial expression which conveys aggression and/or dislike.
- **Isolation/exclusion and other relational bullying:** This occurs where a certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or all of the class group. This practice is usually initiated by the person engaged in bullying behaviour and can be difficult to detect. It may be accompanied by writing insulting remarks about the pupil in public places, by passing around notes about or drawings of the pupil or by whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard. Relational bullying occurs when a person's attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. One of the most common forms includes control: "Do this or I won't be your friend anymore" (implied or stated); a group ganging up against one

person (girl or boy); non-verbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumours about a person or giving them the “silent treatment”.

- **Cyber-bullying:** This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, e-mail, instant messaging (IM), apps, gaming sites, chat-rooms and other online technologies. Being the target of inappropriate or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying. As cyber-bullying uses technology to perpetrate bullying behaviour and does not require face to face contact, cyber-bullying can occur at any time (day or night). Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyber-bullying. For example, a target may be sent homophobic text messages or pictures may be posted with negative comments about a person’s sexuality, appearance etc.
- **Name calling:** Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) which hurts, insults or humiliates should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name-calling of this type refers to physical appearance, e.g., size or clothes worn. Accent or distinctive voice characteristics may attract negative attention. Academic ability can also provoke name calling. This tends to operate at two extremes. There are those who are singled out for attention because they are perceived to be weak academically. At the other extreme there are those who, because they are perceived as high achievers, are also targeted.
- **Damage to property:** Personal property can be the focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, school books and other learning material or interference with a pupil’s locker or bicycle. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.
- **Extortion:** Demands for money may be made, often accompanied by threats (sometimes carried out in the event of the targeted pupil not delivering on the demand). A pupil may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to another who is engaged in bullying behaviour.
- **Homophobic Bullying:** This is a type of bullying that is aimed at young people who are gay or perceived to be gay. It can involve name-calling, exclusion, or violence. This type of bullying is very serious and can be extremely harmful.

Signs and Symptoms

Physiological symptoms can include:

Headaches/migraines; sweating/shaking; palpitations; feeling/being sick; stomach and bowel problems; raised blood pressure; disturbed sleep; loss of energy; loss of appetite

Psychological symptoms include:

Anger; anxiety/worry/fear; panic attacks; depression; loss of confidence and self-esteem; tearfulness; loss of concentration; forgetfulness; lack of motivation; thoughts of suicide; feeling isolated/ helpless

Behavioural changes:

Becoming aggressive; becoming irritable; becoming vengeful; becoming withdrawn; greater use of tobacco; alcohol and drugs; obsessive dwelling on the aggressor; becoming hypersensitive to criticism; becoming emotionally drained.

These signs and behaviours could indicate other problems, but bullying should be considered a possibility and should be investigated

Procedures

1. Report bullying incidents to staff
2. In cases of serious bullying, the incidents will be recorded by staff
3. In serious cases parents should be informed and will be asked to come in to a meeting to discuss the problem
4. If necessary and appropriate, police will be consulted
5. The bullying behaviour or threats of bullying must be investigated and the bullying stopped quickly
6. An attempt will be made to help the bully (bullies) change their behaviour

Outcomes

1. The bully (bullies) may be asked to genuinely apologise.
2. Other consequences may take place.
3. The Ógras Code of Behaviour can be implemented
4. In serious cases, suspension or even exclusion from the club will be considered
5. If possible, the pupils will be reconciled by discussing the questions below:
 - a. What happened?
 - b. What could be done differently next time
 - c. What happens now?
 - d. Is there anything else to discuss or say?
6. After the incident / incidents have been investigated and dealt with, each case will be monitored to ensure repeated bullying does not take place.

Prevention

A whole of organisation approach to bullying ensure that each part of the organisation is involved and responsible for creating an environment that is safe from bullying. In this part we look at a prevention strategy that can be implemented with young people and workers/volunteers.

As and when appropriate, these may include:

- Writing a set of club rules

- Signing a behaviour contract
- Writing stories or poems or drawing pictures about bullying
- Making up role-plays (or using KIDSCAPE role-plays)
- Having discussions about bullying and why it matters
- Organise an awareness workshop in the club
- annual questionnaire
- Newsletter or bulletin
- Peer monitoring
- General Health Promotion programme
- Specific Health Promotion Programme

Guidelines

Responding to Bullying in the Club/Organisation

A leader or young person can ask themselves these four questions to confirm that the behaviour that has been highlighted is indeed bullying:

Targeted	Is the behaviour targeted at a group or individual?
Duration	Has the behaviour been happening over a period of time?
Frequency	How frequent is the behaviour and is there a pattern occurring?
Intention	Is the intention of the behaviour to cause pain to an individual or group?

Recording

It is important that any disclosed incidences of bullying are recorded and kept on file. The record should be completed by the leader or young person who is the target of bullying.

What you need to document when keeping a record of the bullying behaviour:

- Exactly what was said or done
- The date, time and location
- All relevant background information
- Record how you felt, before, during and after the incident

- Identify who was involved and what part they played in the incident – including bystanders
- Retain all copies of memos, e-mails, etc. that support evidence of the bullying behaviour

Once you have confirmed that you are dealing with bullying and the matter has been reported, the person responsible for dealing with the issue can then go on to assess the seriousness of the situation.

How Serious is the Bullying?

In order to assess the impact of the bullying on the target, these questions need to be answered and will give a good indication of the next appropriate steps to take to address the issue.

- How distressed is the target?
- How long has the bullying been going on?
- How aware is the perpetrator in relation to the impact of their behaviour?
- How willing is the perpetrator to acknowledge the hurt that has been caused?
- To what degree is the perpetrator ready to work towards resolution?
- How ready is the target to work towards resolution?

WHAT TO TELL CHILDREN IF THEY ARE BEING BULLIED

What to Do

Act as confident as you can. Face them and tell them clearly to stop. Try and be calm and move away from them.

Don't Hit Out

If someone is bullying you don't try to hit/kick them. You may get badly hurt in a fight and even if you don't, the bully can sometimes use how you hit them against you, and make it seem like you are the bully.

If They Call You Names

If they tease you or slag you off, try and laugh it off. Don't let them see that they have hurt you. Bullies like to get a reaction, if they don't get one there is no point in them bullying you.

Remember, It's Not About You

Often people who bully other people do it to make themselves feel better, because they are unhappy, at school or at home. Remember that they have the problem not you. Don't believe what they say to you, and don't blame yourself.

Tell Your Friends/People You Can Trust In The Youth Club

Tell them what is going on and how you feel. Ask them to come with you to tell a teacher if you are afraid. Ask them to stand up with you against the bully.

Tell Someone

If you're being bullied, try and tell someone about it.

Talk to:

- Your parents
- Someone in your family
- Your youth leaders / teachers
- A Helpline

If your club has a peer mediation or mentoring program try to use it. No one can help you if you don't tell them.

Don't hit back with violence. Getting into a physical fight with someone can be dangerous.

If you are afraid to tell because it might make things worse, tell the person you talk to that you are afraid if they do anything it might make it worse, ask them to find a way to help you deal with it that won't.

What to Say When You Tell

- Tell them what has happened;
- Who is doing it;
- How often it has happened;
- Did anyone see or hear what went on
- What have you tried to do about it.

Working towards resolution

The following are strategies that can be used to respond to an incident of bullying with both workers and young people in an organisation. Depending on the group and the seriousness of the bullying, a choice of methods is outlined below.

Mediation

The process of assisting people to find a common solution to a common problem. Mediation requires a voluntary agreement that all parties will abide by the course of action and the agreed solution. It is without prejudice and all notes of individual cases must be destroyed when it ends. Confidentiality is paramount in both the agreement and in the independent and joint meetings with the parties involved. The process also requires the willingness of both parties to cooperate as it will not work if people refuse to compromise.

No Blame Approach

A common reaction to bullying is to blame and punishes the perpetrator. The '*no blame*' approach takes a different focus by not concentrating on who did what to whom, but instead, focusing on the feeling of the target and what the group involved

in the bullying (perpetrator and bystanders) and the target can do to make the situation better.

The '*no blame*' approach allows the group involved in the bullying behaviour to think about the action that has taken place and the effect it has had on the target. It promotes the perpetrator and the rest of the group involved in the bullying behaviour with an opportunity to redeem themselves.

Steps involved in the 'no blame' approach:

- Interview the target of the bullying – let the target explain his/her feeling to the action that has taken place, this can be done through talking, drawing, or writing down feelings e.g. in the form of a poem;
- Explain the '*no blame*' approach to the target and ask their permission to allow the feelings of the target towards the bullying be shared within the group;
- Convene a meeting with the other young people involved – perpetrators and bystanders;
- Share with the group the targets feelings;
- Hand over responsibility to the group;
- Ask the group for their ideas and solutions to overcome the bullying and to stop it from happening again;
- Let the young people implement their plan;
- Follow-up interviews with each young person

Methods of Shared Concern

- This approach uses a non-confrontational counselling style, with the primary focus being to find a solution. The aim is to enable the target and the bully to function peacefully within the same group, and not to develop a friendship if they do not wish to do so. It comprises of three stages:
- Individual interviews with the perpetrators followed by an interview with the target
- Follow-up discussion with each of the young people to evaluate progress;
- Group discussion with all young people concerned.

Time – Out

By providing some space and time between the perpetrator and target and allowing both parties involved to think about the incident that has taken place, time apart may aid the process of resolving the bullying e.g. removal of the perpetrator away from the target to another group.

Denial of Privileges with The Opportunity to Redeem One's Self

Loss of certain privileges in the youth organisation, e.g. withdrawal of permission to participate in any events or trips organised by the youth group. By using this response, it is hoped that the perpetrator may realise the impact of their actions on the target and the consequences for themselves.

Parental / Guardian Involvement

Parents of both the target and the perpetrator may need to be made aware or called on to intervene in the incident of bullying.

Support Peer Bystanders

Encourage people witnessing the bullying to speak up about it and to befriend the target of the bullying.

Suspension or Expulsion Of The Perpetrator

Suspension or expulsion may be used as a last resort in dealing with the bullying.

Dealing with Parent(s) / Guardian(s) of a Target of Bullying

Guidelines for talking to Parent(s) / Guardian(s) of a Young Person who is the Target of Bullying:

1. Invite the parent(s) / guardian(s) to meet to discuss what has happened based on the information available;
2. Assure parent(s) / guardian(s) that you are pleased that they have taken time to see you;
3. Allow the parent(s) / guardian(s) to express their feelings, uninterrupted;
4. Accept their feelings (they are real for that parent, even if they might seem excessive to you). Use calm supportive language;
5. State categorically that bullying is unacceptable and that you intend to act positively. Assure the parent(s) / guardian(s) that you will keep in touch to update them on progress;
6. Keep a record of any meetings and action taken in response to the issue.

Guidelines for dealing with Parent(s) / Guardian(s) of a Young Person who is a Perpetrator of Bullying:

1. Invite the parent(s) / guardian(s) to meet to discuss what has happened based on the information available;
2. Assure parent(s) / guardian(s) that you are pleased that they have taken the time to see you;
3. Inform the parent(s) / guardian(s) in a clear and objective manner about their child's behaviour;

4. Ask the parent(s) / guardian(s) if they know of any reason for this alleged behaviour e.g. a recent bereavement or home circumstances;
5. Begin with a summary of the group's anti-bullying policy and emphasise the parent(s)/guardian(s) agreement to it;
6. Seek the parent(s)/guardian(s) help in communicating the seriousness of the incident to the perpetrator and enlist their co-operation;
7. Where necessary and based on the seriousness of the bullying behaviour inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the consequences that the group considers appropriate and enlist their co-operation.
8. In some cases of bullying, leaders/workers in the organisation may need to meet with the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the perpetrator and the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the target of bullying to try and help resolve the problem. In instances where you suspect that excessive discipline could result from notifying parent(s)/guardian(s) of their child's behaviour take advice from those with greater expertise and experience in this area e.g. Anti-Bullying Centre (A.B.C.), Trinity College Dublin, Barnardos, Irish Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (ISPCC) or the Garda Juvenile Liaison Officer (JLO) or if deemed necessary the Health Services Executive (HSE).

Preventative Strategies for Bullying

A whole organisational approach to dealing with bullying means that all parties in Ógras are involved and are responsible for creating an anti-bullying environment. Outlined in this section are prevention strategies that can be implemented with young people and leaders.

Leaders and Young People

Implementing an anti-bullying policy	By having an anti-bullying policy in place Leaders and Young People can be secure in knowing that, should bullying occur, there are procedures in place, that are supported by everyone in the organisation to deal with it.
Telling Organisation	A club/group can adopt an ethos of a 'telling organisation'. This means that everyone in the club/group is made aware that if they witness an incident of bullying that they have a responsibility to report it to a leader or staff member. The telling approach supports bystanders and is a deterrent for the perpetrator, as s/he knows that the bullying will not be tolerated.
Teambuilding	This provides an opportunity for all members of the club/group who may not know each other particularly well to work together in accomplishing a task. Teambuilding is an effective way of breaking down barriers in the club/group and can be run on a session or full day basis.
Awareness Raising	Repeating anti-bullying messages to all members of the

	club/group is an effective way to prevent bullying from happening in the first instance. This may take the form of talks, posters, e-mails, text messages, videos or any other form of engaging the group. The message should be clear and concise, spelling out the club's stance on bullying, what bullying is and the different forms it can take, that it is 'OK' to tell and what the club policy and procedures are in relation to bullying.
Awareness Workshops	Bullying will be highlighted at staff and club meetings and everyone will be reminded that the organisation supports a 'zero tolerance' attitude to bullying. Workshops will be organised on an annual basis to make all members aware of the anti-bullying policy that is in place. These workshops will be delivered as part of our Child Protection Training.

If the issue cannot be resolved at club level, the organisation should be informed. At this point the club should forward a report to Ógras. In certain cases, it may be necessary to inform Tusla (HSE), or the Gardaí or na independent body. In Northern Ireland the case can be sent to Social Services. Parents could also look for contact details for these services.

Staff

Bullying will always be an agenda item for staff meeting to ensure that any incidents can be discussed and reported.

Policy Review

Ógras will review this policy every three years, to ensure that the information is updated and that it addresses the needs of the organisation and its members.

Implemented: 2019

Person responsible: Stiúrthóir Ógras

Overall responsibility: Bord Stiúrtha Ógras

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