

ANTI-BULLYING INFORMATION FOR PARENTS



This pamphlet offers some facts about bullying, strategies about what you as a parent can do, and the support our school offers if you believe your child or any child of St Patrick's is being bullied or is bullying others.

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What if my child is Bullying others?

Respond calmly and non-defensively, and commit to working with the school to manage the problem in a helpful way. See the situation as an opportunity for your child to learn important developmental lessons.

What I should NOT do if my child is bullying others?

Do not directly approach the bullied student or their family or try to get other parents to take your child's side.

What can I do to reduce bullying at our school?

Report all incidents of bullying to the school, not just incidents that happen to your own child.

Let your child know how much you disapprove of bullying and why.

Any type of bullying at home should be avoided, and respect for others should be modelled and encouraged.

Talk to your child about the qualities associated with caring friendships and discourage them from staying in "friendships" where they are mistreated or not respected.

Useful websites:

Bullying. No Way!
www.bullyingnoway.com.au

Act Smart, Be Safe
<http://education.qld.gov.au/actsmartbesafe>

References

Safe Schools are Effective Schools
www.sofweb.vic.edu.au/wellbeing/safeschools/bullying/index.htm

An Anti-bullying Strategy for Parents

What is Bullying?

Bullying is when a child or a group of children deliberately and repeatedly upset or hurt another child. Such children have some form of power over the child they are targeting. This may be physical or psychological and may take many forms including hitting, name calling and spreading rumours.

Bullying is not

- **Mutual conflict**-where there is an argument or disagreement but not an imbalance of power, i.e. students are upset and usually want a resolution to the problem
- **Social rejection or dislike**-unless the social rejection is directed towards someone specific and involves deliberate and repeated attempts to cause distress, exclude or create dislike by others, it is not bullying
- **Single episodes of nastiness or meanness, or random acts of aggression or intimidation**-these are not the same as bullying though certainly undesirable. If a student is verbally abused or pushed on one occasion, they are not being bullied.

How do I know if my child is being bullied?

Some children who are being bullied do not talk about it with parents or teachers as they are concerned that "dobbing" will make things worse. Some of the signs that may indicate a child being bullied include:

- Loss of confidence, fearfulness or anxiety
- Change in eating or sleeping habits, bedwetting
- Health problems, vague headaches or stomach aches
- Unhappiness, tearfulness or mood swings, sudden temper tantrums
- An unwillingness or refusal to go to school
- Missing belongings, torn clothing, unexplained bruises, cuts or scratches

What can I do if my child is being bullied?

- Step 1:** Listen carefully to your child and show concern and support.
- Step 2:** Give sensible advice-don't encourage your child to fight back; this will most likely increase the bullying
- Step 3:** Assist your child to develop positive strategies:
- Firmly saying "Leave me alone!" and calmly walking away
 - Avoiding situations that might expose them to further bullying
 - Making new friends
- Step 4:** Ask your child the following questions to understand if there is a repeated pattern:
- What, where and when did the incident happen?
 - Who was involved on each occasion?
 - Did anybody else see it and if so, who?
 - What solutions have you tried so far?
 - The names of any teachers who are aware of the problem
- Step 5:** Contact your child's teacher and arrange a meeting to find out what the school will do to assist you in addressing the situation.

Remember: If you were not aware that your child was being bullied, then perhaps your child's teacher does not know about it either.

What will the school do?

The school will need time to investigate. This involves getting all the facts by listening to all parties including bystanders.

If an allegation is validated:

- The Principal or delegate case manages the process
- Parents of all involved are contacted
- Intervention strategies are determined
- Support for all parties is provided
- Guidance Counsellor involvement (if required)

If bullying has occurred, the school may:

- Apply disciplinary consequences
- Assist students to develop more appropriate social skills
- Implement a behavior management plan or play-ground plan for individual students
- Explicitly teach about conflict and bullying
- Conduct mediation sessions

If an allegation is not validated:

- The issues are addressed with those involved
- The behaviours are named for what they are
- Parents are involved if a pattern is identified