

::12.26 ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

All kinds of bullying are wrong and should not be tolerated within organisations of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Our organisations should be a safe and welcoming place for all children and young people.

What is bullying?

The government defines bullying as; "Deliberately hurtful behaviour repeated often over a period of time" .

What forms does it take?

- :: Bullying can be name calling or teasing.
- :: Bullying is often physical; victims are pushed, punched, kicked and hit.
- :: Victims can be forced to do things they don't want to do, are left out of games or ignored by others.
- :: Cyber bullying is when bullies contact their victims via text messaging or via the Internet.

Why do we have a bullying policy?

- :: All leaders, parents and children who attend this organisation should have an understanding of what bullying is and know that it is not tolerated within the organisation.
- :: All leaders should know what to do if bullying arises.
- :: As an organisation we take bullying seriously, children and parents should be assured that they would be supported when bullying is reported.

Why is it important to respond to Bullying?

- :: Bullying hurts.
- :: Everyone has the right to be treated with respect.
- :: Individuals who are bullying need to learn to stop.
- :: This organisation has a responsibility to respond effectively to bullying issues.

Preventative Measures

- :: Leaders should encourage children to befriend others who are alone within the group.
- :: Bullying should be discussed openly within the group, perhaps through activities such as circle time.
- :: Young people should regularly be encouraged to talk to leaders about anything that is bothering them.

What will happen if bullying occurs?

1. Attempt reconciliation by getting the parties together to talk, it may be that a genuine apology solves the problem.
2. If bullying continues or it is serious, leaders should meet with the parent and child(ren) who is/are being bullied.
3. Leaders should also meet with the child(ren) who is bullying and their parent/s.
4. If serious, bullying should be reported to the Designated Person as a child protection issue.
5. Leaders should consider appropriate consequences for the bully and make sure these are carried through.
6. Keep the situation under review.