

Anti-Bullying Policy

Introduction

St Anne's Community College as a community believes that each student has a right to an education free from fear and intimidation.

The school regards bullying as a serious infringement of individual rights and a serious threat to the self-esteem and self-confidence of targeted pupil(s). Therefore, it does not tolerate bullying of any kind. Every report of bullying is treated seriously and investigated, having due regard for the wellbeing of the children involved. Members of staff in St Anne's Community College accept a collective responsibility, under the direction of the principal, to act in preventing bullying/aggressive/ harassing behaviour by any member of the school community. The school recognises the role of the entire school community in identifying and reporting bullying behaviour and acknowledges its own role in taking appropriate action when bullying behaviour becomes apparent.

The immediate priority, should a bullying incident occur, is ending the bullying, resolving the issues and restoring the relationships involved as far as is practicable. Students' participation in school life in general is encouraged through existing school structures. Awareness of bullying and willingness to take action to prevent or stop it, is part of this participation.

This policy works in conjunction with our Positive Code of Behaviour, IT Acceptable Usage Policy, Mobile Phone policy and any other relevant policies in relation to Anti-Bullying.

Definition

Bullying is defined by the Department of Education as unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

Scope

The policy addresses bullying behaviour, harassment and sexual harassment and works in conjunction with the St. Anne's Community College Code of Positive behaviour.

While this policy addresses issues related to bullying of students (i.e. situations in which one or more students are the victim(s) of bullying), the policy applies to teaching and other school staff, parents/carer, and others as far as measures under the policy relate to them. It is acknowledged that the procedures for dealing with staff-staff incidents may be different and, in this regard, management will refer to Our Dignity at

Work Charter and relevant Employment Equality Acts.

The policy will apply to the following:

- School time (including break times)
- Going to and from school (all methods of transport)
- School tours/ trips
- Extra-curricular activities
- Online behaviour which impacts on school life

Procedures to be taken for reporting incidents

A victim's silence is the greatest weapon of the person engaged in bullying behaviour. Any student who feels they are a victim of bullying should report the matter to any member of the school staff or her parent/carer. Students should not suffer in silence.

Any student who is witness to, has knowledge of or is involved in a bullying incident should report the matter.

Who to tell?

Reports of suspected or alleged bullying may be disclosed to:

- Any staff member with whom the student feels comfortable
- A member of the pastoral care team
- Class Teacher or Year Head
- Another student

How to Tell?

- Students may make a direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, i.e., after class.
- They may hand up a note with homework.
- They may get a parent or friend to tell on their behalf.
- They may make a phone call to the school or to a trusted teacher in the school.
- (The Anti-bullying policy may be reviewed at appropriate intervals through a confidential questionnaire which can also be used to disclose bullying).

Procedures for investigating bullying behaviour

Any report or account of incidents of bullying is to be investigated calmly and professionally. Initially, the member of staff involved will hear the individual

students' version of events.

In the case of:

1. Low level bullying

The staff member involved will:

- Investigate the situation
- Have a serious talk with the instigators about our Positive Code of Behaviour and the Anti-Bullying policy.
- Inform the Head of Year.
- Issue a verbal warning if necessary.
- Outline a fair outcome *if appropriate*: e.g., an apology, return of property etc.
- Remind those involved that they are being documented and monitored.
- Ask students for written reflection on the incident if necessary.

2. More serious bullying

The Head of Year will be informed. S/he:

1. Will inform the student against whom the allegations have been made. The Head of Year will speak to all parties separately; they will be given an unbiased hearing.
2. Those involved in the incident may be asked to write their own accounts. These will be included with all other records of the incident.
3. Will inform the Principal / Deputy Principal of the process.
4. Will inform parents of the students involved.
5. Will outline a fair outcome *if appropriate*: e.g., an apology, return of property etc.
6. May seek verbal agreement regarding future behaviour.
7. May ask students to sign written agreement regarding future behaviour.
8. May refer the students to appropriate agencies for further help.

After the issue has been fully investigated, appropriate sanctions may

be imposed. i.e., detention.

3. Persistent bullying

The above procedures will be followed and in addition:

- The parents and students will be asked to meet with the Principal/ Deputy Principal.
- The Board of Management may need to be informed
- Parents/Guardians will be asked to sign a written agreement regarding future behaviour.
- Counselling will be offered if necessary.
- The student may be referred to NEPS/ Garda Juvenile Liaison Officer as appropriate.
- Contact may be made with other support agencies.

After the issue has been fully investigated, appropriate sanctions will be imposed which may warrant suspension/expulsion as per our code of behaviour. The Board of Management be informed as appropriate, if and as per the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013).

In the case where a member of staff is alleged to have bullied a student, the Principal will investigate the matter and take appropriate action.

In the case where a student is alleged to have bullied a teacher, the Principal will investigate the matter and take appropriate action.

If the alleged incident involves the Principal or Deputy Principal, the LCETB will investigate the matter and take appropriate action.

Noting and recording

Incidents of bullying will be recorded, and the records maintained in files (according to year of entry) by the school authorities. These files are to be kept in the Principal's office. The aim of this record is to aid memory by recording details of the incident and to add clarity in the assessment of the situation.

A template for the report form is included in Appendix II.

Follow-up procedures

- Relevant teachers (i.e., class teachers, etc.) will be made aware of the situation by the Head of Year /the Pastoral Care Team and asked to monitor the students.
- The Head of Year / a member of the Pastoral Care Team member (if necessary) will meet with both the victim and the bully. This will be done individually at first and then together if appropriate, within one week of the initial resolution of the issue.
- The students involved will continue to be monitored by the Pastoral Care Team and relevant teachers. Further meetings will be scheduled if deemed necessary.

The final resolution of the problem should not end with the punishment of the guilty party. Both sides may need healing, rehabilitation, and reconciliation. Victims may need counselling and opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem and to develop their friendship and social skills whenever this is needed. Students who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.

Anti-bullying policy Document

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the Code of Behaviour guidelines issued by TUSLA, the Board of Management of St. Anne's Community College has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools which were published in September 2013.

The Board of Management recognises the serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of students and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

- A positive school culture and climate which is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity.
- Encourages students to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and it promotes respectful relationships across the school community.
- Effective leadership.
- A school-wide approach.
- A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact.
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that build empathy, respect, and resilience in students; and explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including, homophobic and transphobic bullying.)
- Effective supervision and monitoring of students; Supports for staff; Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and on-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

In accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools bullying is defined as follows:

- Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted, by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- Deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip, and other forms of relational bullying
- Cyber-bullying.
- Identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.
- Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

However, in the context of this policy, where a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message is school related/impacts on the school image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Positive Code of behaviour.

Additional information on several types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows: (see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools)

- Subject teachers; Class Teachers; Heads of Year; members of the Pastoral Care team; Guidance Counsellor; Deputy Principal and Principal.

The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows (see Section 6.5 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):

Considerations in creating a positive school climate to counter bullying

- Staff members share responsibility, under the direction of the principal teacher, to act in preventing bullying/aggressive behaviour by any member of the school.
- The school promotes qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among all its members both in school and out of school.
- The school acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual and his/her worth as

a human being.

- The school promotes habits of mutual respect, courtesy, and an awareness of the inter dependence of people in group and community.
- The school recognises the role of the other community agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying.
- The school recognises the right of the parents to share in the task of equipping the pupil with a range of life-skills.
- The school recognises the need to co-operate with and keep parents informed on procedures to improve relationships within the school community.
- The school takes particular care of “at risk” students’ and uses its monitoring system to provide early intervention when/if necessary and responds to the needs, fears, or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner.
- The school identifies aspects of curriculum through which positive and lasting influences can be exerted towards forming students’ attitudes and values.
- The school has the capacity to change in response to the students’ needs.
- The school has a clear commitment to promoting equity in general and gender equity in all aspects of its functioning.
- The school disapproves of vulgar, offensive, sectarian, or other aggressive behaviour by any of its members.
- The school promotes positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline, and responsibility among all its members.
- The school acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment.
- The school’s procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows (see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools - Link)
- All bullying is serious because the experience of being abused, insulted, physically attacked, or emotionally threatened is one which young people tend to carry with them for a long time. The aim of this procedure is to provide an early detection system for signs of such bullying behaviour and the recommended approach for dealing with the issue.
- All reports of bullying, no matter how trivial should be investigated and dealt with by teachers/class tutors and then reported verbally and in writing to the principal and or DLP (report template is in the main office).
- On investigation, serious cases of bullying behaviour by students should be referred immediately to the Principal/DLP or Deputy Principal/DDLP (if Principal/DLP is unavailable).
- The Principal or Deputy Principal will, from time to time, refer cases to be dealt with through the school’s code of conduct/discipline as deemed appropriate.

- Parents or guardians of those involved will be informed by the Principal or Deputy Principal earlier rather than later of such incidents to give the opportunity of discussing the matter.
- Parents/guardians should inform the class tutor regarding incidents of bullying behaviour which they might suspect or that have come to their attention through their children or other parents/guardians.
- It should be made clear to all students that when they report incidents of bullying, they are not telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
- Class teachers in consultation with the Head of Year, Deputy Principal and Principal should record and respond appropriately regarding reports of bullying behaviour in accordance with the school's policy and code of conduct and discipline.
- Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, caretakers and cleaners are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to a class teacher.
- In the case of a complaint by a student regarding a staff member, this should normally in the first instance be brought to the attention of their Head of Year who in turn informs the Principal.

The school's programme of support for working with students affected by bullying is as follows (see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools). The school will include topics on bullying on its curriculum during SPHE classes. In-service will be made available to staff members. Bullying issues will be highlighted during class assemblies, staff meetings and pastoral care meetings. Students will be offered individual counselling and informed of outside school supports. Parents/guardians will be included, informed, and advised of supports.

Supervision and Monitoring of Students

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

Prevention of Harassment

The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of students or staff or the harassment of students or staff on any of the nine grounds specified i.e., gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on the 16th of December 2021.

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, is otherwise readily accessible to parents and students on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, be otherwise readily accessible to parents and students on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Chairperson of Board of Management Secretary/Principal

APPENDIX 1

Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual review of the school's anti bullying policy and its implementation. The following checklist must be used for this purpose. The checklist is an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. To complete the checklist, an examination and review involving both quantitative and qualitative analysis, as appropriate across the various elements of the implementation of the school's anti bullying policy will be required.

Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools</i> ?	
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	
Is the Board satisfied that school staff are sufficiently familiar with the policy and procedures to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy and procedures in their day to day work?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	
Has the Board discussed how well the school is handling all reports of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and not therefore included in the Principal's periodic report to the Board?	
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	
Has the data available from cases reported to the Principal (by the bullying recording template) been analysed to identify any issues, trends or patterns in bullying behaviour?	
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	

APPENDIX 2 (This form may be used, an email or written report either)

**St. Anne's Community College
Bullying Incident Report**

Year Group: _____ **Date:** _____

Reported by: _____ **Time:** _____

Details of Incident:

Actions Taken:

Suggestions for future:

Signed: