

Anti- Bullying Policy

Introduction

This policy sets out the framework within which the whole school community manages issues relating to bullying and the school's strategy to prevent bullying behaviour.

This policy is based on a review of the current policy that was formulated and ratified by the Board of Management on April 22nd 2013.

Scope

This policy addresses bullying behaviour, harassment, sexual harassment and cyber bullying. While the policy addresses issues related to bullying of students, the policy applies to teaching and other school staff, parents/guardians and others insofar as measures under the policy relate to them. The policy applies to all school related activities, school tours and trips and extra- curricular activities.

Rationale

In keeping with our mission statement, all members of our school community belong to a learning community that is Catholic in ethos and founded on the values of the Sisters of Mercy of mutual respect and trust in the pursuit of excellence. This policy sets out to ensure that these values are upheld in all our relationships.

The school is obliged under the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 to include in its code of behaviour an anti-bullying policy.

The school has obligations in relation to harassment and sexual harassment under the Equal Status Acts, 2000 to 2004.

The school has obligations to include its child protection policy and procedures in its anti- bullying policy. This obligation is fulfilled in their incorporation in this policy.

Goals

1. To create a school ethos which encourages students to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
2. To raise awareness of bullying as an unacceptable form of behaviour with school management, teachers, support staff, students, and parents/guardians.
3. To create a school ethos that acknowledges accommodates and respects diversity of students and staff across the nine grounds covered by the equality legislation specifically gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.
4. To ensure that the school's SPHE programme raises awareness of the factors associated with bullying behaviour and develops appropriate knowledge, skills and behaviour.
5. To take practical action to prevent incidents of bullying behaviour by ensuring comprehensive supervision and monitoring measures through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation.
6. To develop procedures for reporting and recording incidents of bullying.
7. To develop procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying.
8. To develop support structures for those affected by bullying behaviour and those involved in bullying behaviour.
9. To work with and through the various local agencies in countering all forms of bullying and anti-social behaviour.

Content of policy

Definition of bullying

Bullying is repeated aggression conducted by an individual or a group against others: such aggressive behaviour may be verbal, psychological or physical. The term bullying also encompasses harassment or sexual harassment defined as follows:

Harassment: any form of unwanted conduct in relation to any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation described above, that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile degrading or offensive environment for the victim.

Sexual harassment: any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile degrading or offensive environment for the victim.

Different types of cyber bullying include:

Personal intimidation: this behaviour includes receiving SMS messages, posting abusive and threatening comments on a student's profile or other websites, or sending threatening messages via instant messaging.

Impersonation: This behaviour involves setting up fake profiles and web pages that are attributed to a person and it can also involve gaining access to a person's profile or instant messaging account and using it to contact others while impersonating the account or profile owner.

Exclusion: This behaviour involves blocking an individual from a popular group or community such as a class group, deleting them from friendship lists and /or using 'ignore functions' on a continuous and concerted way.

Personal humiliation: This behaviour involves posting images of videos intended to embarrass someone, it can involve users sharing and posting images or videos of victims being abused or humiliated offline, or users sharing personal communications such as e-mails or text messages with a wider audience than was intended by the sender.

False reporting: This behaviour involves making false reports to the service provider or reporting other users for a range of behaviours with a view to having the user's account or website deleted.

Types of behaviour involved

The means of bullying are constantly changing. The following list includes typical behaviours that constitute bullying. This list is not exhaustive.

- Physical aggression
- Damage to property
- Extortion
- Intimidation
- Gestures
- Silent telephone/mobile phone calls
- Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls
- Abusive text messages
- Abusive email/ website messages
- The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person
- Isolation and exclusion
- Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation
- Name calling
- Slagging
- A combination of any of the behaviours in this list.

Actions to prevent bullying behaviour

- This policy identifies the need to prevent bullying and to control bullying. This school raises awareness of bullying behaviour through its SPHE programme, at assemblies, through its tutor classes, by conducting regular surveys, through its pastoral care system, by communicating with the Student Council and Parents' Association, at meetings held by the anti-bullying team of teachers and at general staff meetings.
- The anti-bullying policy is integral to the school's code of expected behaviour.
- Students are under the supervision of teachers during all school related activities.
- A student mentor programme is in place to enable the integration of first year students.
- A team of head students is in place to help in the creation of a safe learning environment for all students.
- Internet activities that occur in the school are conducted under the supervision of teachers.
- The school has developed an internet usage policy to link with this policy and information for parents/guardians on supports are included in that policy.

Implementation Arrangements: Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Management

To ensure that:

- an anti-bullying policy is developed in consultation with teachers, students, parents/guardians
- the policy is implemented.

Principal/ Deputy- Principal

- To develop the policy in consultation with teachers, students, parents/guardians
- To implement the policy
- To facilitate programmes which help to eliminate bullying behaviour
- To follow the procedures of the policy

Teaching staff

- To develop the policy in consultation with the Principal, Deputy-Principal, students, parents/guardians
- To implement the policy
- To follow procedures
- To educate students on the policy

Non-teaching staff

- To report to any Year Head, Deputy-Principal or Principal any incident of bullying witnessed by them or reported to them

- To implement the policy
- To help in the creation of a respectful learning school

Students

- To support the Board of Management in the development of the policy
- To behave at all times in a respectful manner
- To report to any Year Head, Deputy-Principal or Principal any incident of bullying witnessed by them or reported to them.

Parents/guardians

- To support the Board of Management in the development of the policy
- To report to any Year Head, Deputy-Principal or Principal any incident of bullying witnessed by them or reported to them
- To support the school in the creation of a respectful learning environment.

Ratification and Communication

Ratification date by the Board of Management: During the third term every year.

Communication

Parents/guardians will be informed of the revised policy through its publication on the school's website, at information meetings and at specific meetings with parents. Parents/guardians of incoming students will be informed of the policy on the enrolment of the student.

Monitoring the implementation of the policy

The Principal/Deputy-Principal, with the assistance of the anti-bullying team, will monitor this policy at team meetings.

Reviewing and evaluating the policy

The policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Management. On-going review will be welcomed taking due regard to changing information and or guidelines by the Department of Education and Science.

The policy will be evaluated on the basis of the following:

1. The level of awareness of the school community of the policy
2. Actions taken to prevent bullying
3. Initiatives taken to promote equality diversity and affirm diversity
4. Procedures for recording, investigating and dealing with reported incidents have been implemented
5. Positive feedback from parents/guardians, students and staff
6. Bullying behaviour has reduced.