

ST. PATRICK'S CLASSICAL SCHOOL



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

St. Patrick's Classical School Anti-Bullying Policy

The Board of Management of St. Patrick's Classical School in accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB undertakes, within the framework of the school's overall Code of Behaviour, to implement the procedures contained in the Department of Education and Skills Circular 0045/2013 relating to Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools.

In this regard the Board of Management is fully committed to the following key principals of best practise in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour; providing a positive school culture and climate

St. Patrick's Classical School Mission Statement

St. Patrick's Classical School is a Catholic Voluntary School for boys of all abilities and backgrounds under the patronage of the Bishop of Meath. The school was established as a secondary school to serve the educational needs of the community of parishes, forming this part of the Diocese. As such it will at all times seek, through opportunities for work and prayer and its Religious Studies programme, to deepen and enrich the Catholic faith of all pupils.

The school aims to provide, through as wide and as varied a curriculum as is possible, for the spiritual, intellectual, emotional, social, cultural and moral development of all its students.

As partners in this educational process Management, Staff and Parents are conscious of the importance of encouraging the growth of positive behaviour and the meaningful understanding of all aspects of living with regard to citizenship, family, work and leisure.

St. Patrick's Classical School Anti – Bullying Code

Bullying is not tolerated in or near our school

We want St. Patrick's to be a place where:

- Pupils, teachers and parents treat each other fairly and with respect
- Bullying behaviour is not tolerated
- People feel safe and are able to report bullying without being afraid
- People stand up for and support one another

Introduction to this Policy

The management and staff of this school take the issue of bullying very seriously. As outlined in our code of discipline ***“bullying is regarded as being particularly offensive to the spirit of St. Patrick's Classical School and will not be tolerated under any circumstances”***. To help counter this issue the school at all times tries to foster an environment where bullying behaviour is not tolerated and all breaches are treated seriously.

Consequently it has drawn up the following anti-bullying policy with due consideration to the Department of Education Guidelines on Countering Bullying in Primary and Post-Primary Schools, 1993.

Definition of Bullying

In accordance with the 2013 Anti-Bullying Procedures for Post Primary Schools Procedures, bullying is defined 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.

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in this non-exhaustive definition:

- (i) deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying;
- (ii) cyber-bullying; and

(iii) 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.

In addition, in the context of these procedures placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

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 this definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour. A single incident can have a serious effect on a pupil and may also constitute harassment which is legally prohibited in schools under equality legislation. Harassment is any form of unwanted conduct related to any of the nine discriminatory grounds (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).

Scope of Policy

We hold a whole school approach to guard against bullying. This includes student to student; staff to student; student to staff; staff to staff.

Types of Bullying

Examples of bullying behaviour unacceptable in St. Patrick's School include (but is not necessarily limited to) the following:

- **Physical:** e.g. fighting, pushing, tripping others.
- **Psychological:** e.g. isolation, exclusion, intimidation, aggressive body language, extortion and damage to another person's property.
- **Relational**
This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying, e.g. spreading rumours about a student, rallying friends against a student, etc.
Behaviours include:

- Whispering in company so as to exclude another.
- Malicious gossip.
- Isolation & exclusion.
- Ignoring, turning others against a student.
- Excluding from the group.
- Taking someone's friends away.
- **Racial/Identity-based:** e.g. commenting on others race, colour, ethnic background, accent, religious beliefs, membership of the Traveller Community or other identity-based bullying such as bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.
- **Sexual:** e.g. sexual harassment including comments, unwelcome touching or malicious comments about someone's sexual orientation.
- **Verbal:** e.g. name calling, hurtful "slagging", jeering.
- **Homophobic and Transgender**
 Spreading rumors about a person's sexual/gender orientation
 Taunting a person of a different sexual/gender orientation
 Name calling e.g. Gay, queer and used in a derogatory manner
 Physical intimidation or attacks
 Threats
- **Cyber**
 Silent telephone/mobile phone calls.
 Use of mobile phones during school hours to access social network sites.
 Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls.
 Abusive text messages.
 Abusive email.
 Abusive website comments/blogs/pictures e.g. Facebook, Twitter and others.
 Any misuse of Information and Communication Technology.
 Video recording without the person's permission
 Taking/sending photographs by electronic device.
 Creating sites about a particular person.
 Spreading rumours.
 Breaking confidence.

The above bullying may often take the form of –

- **Group bullying:** When more than one person engages in bullying another. In such cases there is usually a "ring leader" who would direct or encourage others.
- **One-to-one bullying:** One pupil bullying another.
- **Staff to student bullying:** Teacher bullying a pupil.
- **Student/s to staff bullying:** Pupil/s bullying a teacher who it must be remembered is as vulnerable to bullying as a pupil might be.
- **Staff to staff bullying:** St. Patrick's Classical School adopted the "Dignity in the Workplace" Charter.

Rights and Responsibilities

- Pupils and teachers have the right to work and learn in an atmosphere that is free from bullying and harassment.
- Parents and Guardians have the right to know that their children can work and learn in a safe environment free from bullying. Parents have a responsibility to ensure that their son does not engage in bullying.
- Everyone has a responsibility to uphold the anti-bullying ethos in the school and to report any behaviour they witness that threatens this ethos.

Signs and Symptoms-

It is important for everyone to be aware of the signs and symptoms of bullying so as to take measures to prevent its reoccurrence and help those affected. Signs and symptoms can include :

- Anxiety about travelling to or from school – (requesting parents to drive or collect them, changing route of travel).
- Unwillingness to go to school – (refusal to attend or “mitching”).
- Deterioration in educational performance.
- Pattern of physical illnesses – (headaches, stomach aches etc.)
- Unexplained changes in mood or behaviour.
- Visible signs of anxiety or distress.
- Spontaneous out-of-character comments about either pupils or teacher.
- Possessions missing or damaged.
- Increased requests for money or stealing money.
- Unexplained bruising or cuts or damaged clothing.
- Serious change in pattern of friendship, especially loss of friends.

These signs do not necessarily mean that a pupil is being bullied. However, if repeated or occurring in combination these signs do warrant investigation

Suggestions for Parents

It is advised that parents should always listen to what their children are saying by:

- Giving positive attention
- Active listening
- Giving your time
- Not making snap judgements of evaluations
- Not criticising
- Not interrupting
- Avoiding continuous questioning
- Allowing them ample time and space to convey their fears (don't make them ashamed of the fears).

If you are concerned that your child is involved in bullying behaviour or is a victim of bullying contact the school immediately and discuss the situation with a staff member. This could be their Tutor, Year Head, Guidance Counsellor, Chaplain, Deputy Principal, Principal or any other member of staff.

Preventative Measures

To help prevent instances of bullying the school actively promotes the following measures to guard against this issue. These include:

- An Anti-Bullying Committee made up of two staff members for each year that act as liaison persons on incidents of suspected bullying.
- Anti – Bullying week during the first term of each academic year
- Cool School Anti – Bullying curriculum to be taught in S.P.H.E. from the beginning of first year. This curriculum, made up of five lessons, will be taught throughout school. Five additional lessons from third year onwards will be taught on relational bullying.
- Confidential Anti – Bullying Questionnaire at the beginning of every term, to encourage disclosure. This will be followed up within two weeks.
- The Anti – Bullying Code present and visible at various points around the school.
- A suggestion box that allows pupils alert staff to issues that may be arising, (which will also be employed for other activities so as to reduce the possibility of stigma).
- An Anti-Bullying box in the staffroom where staff who feel they may have witnessed an incident of negative behaviour between one pupil and another, which may constitute bullying, can put in an anti-bullying slip that records the incident, which will then be picked up by the Anti-Bullying Committee.
- A prefect system for all first year and second year classes.
- A summarized version of the policy to be included in the student’s school journal.
- Cool school Anti – Bullying programme established in the school.
- Ongoing teacher training in the management of bullying and awareness of the HSE’s children first guidelines.
- Induction of new staff to all policies and procedures.

The measures listed above do not take the place of possible sanctions laid down in the School’s Code of Behaviour. Students who are guilty of instances of bullying may also be liable for sanction in the School’s Code of Behaviour. Responsibility for deciding this will remain with Subject Teacher, Tutor, Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal.

Procedures

It is crucial that in all circumstance standard procedures are followed to ensure that the relevant staff, pupils and parents are clear how bullying incidents are dealt with in St. Pat's.

Procedures for Telling (Student to student bullying)

It is of utmost importance to report all bullying behaviour as soon as possible. All incidents will be dealt with as confidentially as possible within the children first guidelines. Only those who need to know will be kept informed and every effort will be made to ensure the safety of student reporting bullying.

- It is school policy to encourage disclosure of information where instances of bullying behaviour occur or are suspected. Students may approach their Tutor, Year Head, Guidance Counsellor, Chaplain, Deputy Principal, Principal or any member of staff.
- Students may report bullying to any teacher with whom they feel comfortable, by direct approach at any time, by handing up a note with homework, by phoning, by letting a friend/parent tell on their behalf.
- A confidential questionnaire will be handed out each term to encourage disclosure. This will be followed up within two weeks by staff.
- A suggestion box that allows pupils alert staff to issues that may be arising, (which will also be employed for other activities so as to reduce the possibility of stigma).

Procedures for Recording (Student to student bullying)

- A record of all reports of bullying will be kept. The person to whom the matter is reported or who observes bullying-like behaviour or behaviour of one student's maltreatment of another will record it, noting both culprit and victim, on an Anti-Bullying form. This form will be placed in an Anti-Bullying Box placed centrally located in teacher staff room.
- Each year group has two specifically designated teachers who will check the box on a regular basis and dealing with victims or culprits from their appropriate year.
- The designated teachers will review the incident and if they feel it warrants immediate attention they will meet both culprit and victim, separately and in a non-accusatory manner. At all stages the anti-bullying committee focuses on a restorative approach, while the tutor and year head deal with discipline.
- They will then scan the note and record the note and incident in the shared folder. If a pupil asks for confidentiality, while the teacher can never assure secrecy, they may use their discretion to write down on the top of the relevant Incident Report, *"Treat with*

Discretion". They will then enter the slip in specially allocated folders that record all incidents and possible incidents of bullying.

- The tutor will then have the responsibility of liaising with the Year Head in pursuing the correct course of action.
- In serious cases or extremely sensitive cases of bullying the person who is the first point of contact may go immediately to the Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal, rather than process an Incident Report as usual. The Guidance Counsellor may also be involved on the discretion of any of the above-mentioned actors.
- Students may be asked to write an account of the incident. In some cases the teacher will make a written record of the incident, which the student will read and sign.
- Where Class Observation Sheets have been used by teachers to ascertain the extent and nature of bullying in a class. These records will be kept on file in the school.
- Records of bullying will be kept on record for three years after all students concerned have left the school. The records will then be shredded.

Procedures for Investigating (Student to student bullying)

- Where suspicion of bullying is identified, class observation sheet will be used.
- For the safety of all, students reporting bullying and those alleged to be bullying will be interviewed separately by one or more of the following staff: Tutor, Guidance Counsellor, Year Head, Deputy Principal, Principal. Teachers will endeavour that any interviews are done in close proximity or sight of another adult.
- Witnesses and other students involved in the incident may also be interviewed.
- A restorative approach will be used when investigating incidents. No student will be subject to public humiliation and the emphasis at all times will be on seeking a change of behaviour. However the agreed sanction system will apply where a student has been found to have employed bullying behaviour.
- A record will be kept of the proceedings and kept in the pre-assigned folders on Bullying previously mentioned.

Procedures for Resolving Incidents and Agreed Sanctions (Student to student bullying)

All concerned will be offered appropriate support. This may mean an interview/s with Tutor, Guidance Counsellor, Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal. Furthermore for cases where deeper issues may apply, the student might be recommended to be taken into the care of the Pastoral Care Team. Finally it may be necessary to seek outside help for some students. This will be with the permission of the parents and the student.

Other points to note include:

- A restorative approach will be used when investigating incidents. No student will be subject to public humiliation and the emphasis at all times will be on seeking a change of behaviour.
- If appropriate, where confidentiality is not in danger of being compromised a student may be asked to write an apology or make an appropriate restitution.
- When an investigation is complete and a student has been found to be bullying they may also be asked to sign an agreement that the behaviour will not recur. A parent may also be asked to sign.
- This notwithstanding the agreed sanction system will apply where a student has been found to have employed bullying behaviour.

Suggested Procedures for Other Relationships.

Student to staff bullying

Reporting & Recording:

- Teaching staff or other school staff may report bullying by students to the tutor, year head, deputy principal or principal in writing.
- A record of the incidents and staff's written complaint and the investigation and resolution will be kept on file for three years after all students concerned have left the school. The records will then be shredded/deleted.

Investigating:

- The student will be interviewed by the Principal. Such interviews will take place in areas that are easily visible. The three rooms adjoining the Principal's Office and the staff room are suggested.
- Witnesses and other students involved in the incident may also be interviewed.
- A record will be kept of the proceedings.

Resolving:

- The agreed sanction system will apply where bullying has occurred. Student/s will also be expected to apologise to the staff member concerned.

Staff to student bullying**Reporting & Recording:**

- Students may report bullying incidents by teachers to the Principal or Deputy Principal. Parents/Guardians may report on their behalf. The student may be asked to write an account of the incident/s.
- A record of the incident/s and student's written complaint and the investigation and resolution will be kept on file for three years after all students concerned have left the school. The records will then be shredded/deleted.

Investigating:

- For the safety of all concerned, the student will be interviewed by one staff member. It is suggested that the interview take place in the presence of another teacher. Over the course of the interview they may be asked to give a written account. (This may be written down by one of the attending staff members and signed by the student).
- Witnesses and other students involved in the incident may also be interviewed.
- The Principal will interview the teacher concerned. The teacher may be asked for a written account of the incident.

Resolving:

- Where bullying has occurred, the Principal will give the teacher a verbal warning. Further offences will be dealt with by the BOM.
- Where there is disagreement about whether bullying occurred, the Principal may engage the services of a trained mediator to mediate between the student & parent/s and the teacher. This will only happen with the permission of both parties.

Staff to Staff bullying

This is dealt with in the section “Types of Bullying” on page 2. See also the School ‘Dignity in the Workplace Policy’.

Re-evaluating of Incidents

- Teacher/s who have been involved in the investigation will link in with all students concerned for a period of time to ensure that the bullying has stopped.
- Students who were found to be bullying may be requested to report each week to a designated teacher to discuss their behaviour during the previous week.
- Pro-social behaviour will be praised.

How and when the policy will be evaluated

The policy will be evaluated by questionnaire to all parties (students, staff and parents) to establish if it meets the needs of all and that this be done every three years.

Statements of who agreed policy and when

- An anti-bullying policy committee produced a draft version that was presented to members of the student and Parents’ Council, staff and Board of Management with an invitation to comment.
- The policy was redrafted as necessary in **December 2013** and September 2019
- The policy was then sent to the Board of Management and ratified.
It will be updated and reviewed by the Board annually thereafter.
- Each new family and student is informed about the school’s anti bullying stance at induction and are informed that a copy of the policy is available on our school website.

Policy reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management:

September 26-09-2019 January 10-01-2023

November 19-11-2020

September 23-09-2021

The Board of Management approved and ratified the School Policy on the 29-09-2022.

Signed: *Fr. Gerry Stuart*

Fr. Gerry Stuart

Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: 29-09-2022

Signed: *Mr. Harry Mc Garry*

Mr. Harry Mc Garry

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: 29-09-2022

Appendix 1

Committee 2019-20

First year	Colette O'Brien & Martin Cunniffe
Second Year	Jane Costelloe & Deirdre Giles
Third Year	Niall Boyle & Mary Mc Tiernan
TY	Ronan Moore & Aisling Bowens
Fifth Year	Nicole Smith & Darren Bellew
Sixth Year	Therese Mc Laughlin & Mary O'Brien

Committee 2020-21

First year	Colette O'Brien & Cathal o Reilly
Second Year	Jane Costelloe & Deirdre Giles
Third Year	Niall Boyle & Mary Mc Tiernan

TY	Kelly Geraghty & Aisling Bowens
Fifth Year	Nicole Smith & Therese Mc Laughlin
Sixth Year	Darren Bellew & Mary O Brien

Committee 2021-22

First year	Rachel Kiernan & Cathal o Reilly
Second Year	Shane Kerrigan & Katriona Kelly
Third Year	Niall Boyle & Mary Mc Tiernan
TY	Jane Costelloe & Aisling Bowens
Fifth Year	Gillian Egan & Colette O Brien
Sixth Year	Darren Bellew & Mary O Brien