

## **Anti-Bullying Policy** **St. Louis Secondary School, Monaghan**

### **Rationale**

In accordance with our Mission Statement St. Louis Secondary School, Monaghan aims to create a safe environment where everyone is treated with consideration, dignity and respect, therefore bullying is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. Parents have a right to know their child is safe from bullying while in school. Everyone in the school community, staff, students and parents have a responsibility to ensure that the school's anti bullying ethos is upheld. In particular everyone has a responsibility to report bullying when they are aware of it. Bystanders have a particular responsibility not to support bullying and should also encourage others to report if they are being bullied.



### **Definition of Bullying**

Bullying is repeated aggression, verbal, psychological, physical, racial, sexual or relational conducted by an individual or a group against others.

### **Examples of Bullying**

These can occur in the following situations: student to student, teacher to student, student to teacher, parent to teacher, teacher to parent, staff to staff and to any other member of the school community

- Physical violence such as hitting, pushing or spitting at another person
- Interfering with another person's property, by stealing, hiding or damaging it e.g. clothing, schoolbag, locker
- Using offensive names when addressing another person
- Bullying by means of technology e.g. mobile phones and internet
- Taking and distributing unauthorised photographs
- Teasing or spreading rumours about another person or his/her family

- Belittling another person's abilities and achievements
- Writing offensive notes or graffiti about another person
- Excluding another person from a group activity
- Ridiculing another person's appearance, way of speaking, personal mannerisms or background
- Drawing attention to a person's sexual orientation and behaviour
- Drawing attention to a person's racial, ethnic or religious background

This list is not exhaustive.



## Guidelines

### For Pupils

- **Do** report to a member of staff if you are being bullied. You may get a parent or friend to tell on your behalf.
- **Do** report to a member of staff if you witness someone being bullied.
- **Do not** become involved with any kind of bullying under any circumstances.
- **Do not suffer in silence, let someone know.**

### For Parents

In spite of preventative measures teachers are aware that bullying can occur and we would encourage parents to:

- Ensure that channels of communication with your daughter are kept open by listening to her and supporting her at all times.

- Watch for signs of distress in your daughter, for example, an unwillingness to attend school, a pattern of headaches or stomach aches, missing personal belongings, request for extra pocket money, damaged clothing or bruising.
- Be aware of your daughter's friends.
- Inform the school immediately i.e. Principal, Deputy Principal, Class Tutor, Year Head, Teacher or Guidance Counsellor if you think your daughter is being bullied
- Be aware of the influence of texting and internet use in the area of bullying.
- Discourage your daughter from retaliating.
- Familiarise yourself with the school's Anti-Bullying Policy. ( School web site [www.stlouismonaghan.com](http://www.stlouismonaghan.com) .In Student Journal, also written into School's Code of Behaviour)

### **Preventative measures**

#### **St Louis Anti Bullying Awareness Programme.**

- An Anti Bullying month is held in the school every year during which the 'Cool School' lessons are taught.
- The Cool School Relational Lessons are also taught throughout the year to various class groups.
- A regular and confidential questionnaire is administered to all students once a term and will be followed up.
- Where issues of bullying type behaviour are suspected, a Class Observation Sheet is used. Subject teachers observe the behaviour of a class over a two-week period and record any incidents observed.
- In certain circumstances, a Class Sociogram may be used. The aim is to establish the dynamics of relationships and friendships within a class.
- Regular reminders of The Anti Bullying Policy and its procedures are given at assemblies.
- Parents are informed about the Anti Bullying policy at the 1<sup>st</sup> year information night
- Staff, students and parents are made aware of the policy by having it included in the school journal.
- Coiste members are on alert for incidents of unacceptable behaviour.
- There is ongoing teacher training on the issue.
- Anti Bullying awareness is an important element in certain areas of the curriculum e.g. Religious Education, CSPE and SPHE. It is also highlighted by:
  1. Poster and poetry competitions
  2. Drama
  3. Visual displays throughout the school

4 Students are asked to sign the Code of Behaviour which includes the Anti Bullying Policy.

5. A peer mentoring group of 4<sup>th</sup> Years is linked with 1<sup>st</sup> Years to help in this regard.

- An Anti Bullying committee is in place in the school.

Its functions are:

1. Prevention of Bullying in School
2. Continuous monitoring of the issue of bullying
3. Promotion of awareness of the issue of bullying and our Anti Bullying Policy amongst students, staff and parents.
4. Organisation of staff training in the management of bullying.
5. Continuous development and updating of the School Anti Bullying Policy

### **Agreed Procedures for dealing with bullying.**

#### **1. Reporting**

All members of the school community have an obligation to report incidents of bullying.

Reporting may be done in the following ways:

- Direct approach to any Teacher or to The Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Head, Guidance Counsellor, Class Tutor, Coiste members or Cairde.
- A note handed to a teacher e.g. with homework
- A phone call by a parent or student to the school
- A note can be put into the Incident Report Box at the Deputy Principal's office.

#### **2. Recording**

- All reported incidents are recorded on an Incident Report Form by the person to whom the report is made. This is signed by this person and the student making the report.
- Every stage of the procedure is recorded in writing. Records are kept in a filing cabinet in the Deputy Principal's office. These will be destroyed 7 years after all concerned have left school
- All incidents will be dealt with confidentially and every effort will be made to ensure the safety of an individual reporting an incident.

#### **3. Investigating an incident.**

- The initial report will be passed on to the Year Head, Guidance Counsellor, Deputy Principal or Principal for investigation.
- Students involved will be interviewed separately.

- Witnesses will also be interviewed.
- Class observation and sociograms will be used to gather evidence of the extent and nature of the unacceptable behaviour.
- A restorative approach will be used when investigating incidents. No one will be subjected to public humiliation. The emphasis will be on seeking a change in behaviour.
- The identities of all involved will be kept confidential during each step of the procedure.

#### **4. Resolution**

- A restorative approach will be used and every effort will be made to resolve the matter amicably. All involved will be listened to and no student will be subjected to humiliation.
- The emphasis will be on seeking a change in unacceptable behaviour.
- Where necessary, support will be offered, e.g. counselling, pastoral care, referral to outside services for help.
- When the investigation is complete and a student is found to have used bullying behaviour they may be asked to sign an agreement and this will be kept on file until 7 years after all concerned in the incident have left school. Records will then be shredded.
- Sanctions as per the school's Code of Behaviour will be applied where bullying has occurred.

#### **5. Review**

After the bullying matter is resolved regular contact is kept with all involved in the incident to ensure that the issue does not recur.

#### **Agreed Procedures for Reported Incident(s)**

##### **Student to student**

- All students involved will be interviewed separately by the Year Head, Deputy Principal, Principal or Guidance counsellor and may be asked to write an account.
- Witnesses may also be interviewed and may be asked to write an account.
- Parents will be kept informed where incidents are considered to be serious.

- A restorative approach will be used when investigating incidents. No one will be subjected to public humiliation. The emphasis will be on seeking a change in behaviour.
- The identities of all involved will be kept confidential during each step of the procedure.
- If a further offence occurs a written warning will be given.
- A further offence will be dealt with by the Board of Management.
- Where there is disagreement about whether bullying occurred, the Principal may engage the services of a trained mediator to mediate between those involved. This will only happen with the permission of both parties and their parents. Records will be kept for 7 years after all students concerned have left the school. They will then be shredded.

### **Teacher to student**

- For the safety of all concerned, the complaining student and/or her parents will be interviewed by two staff members (Principal and one other) and may be asked to give a written account. Witnesses may be interviewed.
- The teacher concerned will be interviewed by the Principal, unless the Principal is the named person. If the Principal is the named person then the teacher will be interviewed by the Deputy Principal. The teacher concerned may request the presence of a third party.
- He/she may be asked for a written account of the incident.
- A restorative approach will be used when investigating incidents. No one will be subjected to public humiliation. The emphasis will be on seeking a change in behaviour.
- The identities of all involved will be kept confidential during each step of the procedure.
- If a further offence occurs a written warning will be given.
- A further offence will be dealt with by the Board of Management.
- Where there is disagreement about whether bullying occurred, the Principal may engage the services of a trained mediator to mediate between the student and parent(s) and the teacher. This will only happen with the permission of both parties. Records will be kept for 7 years after those concerned have left the school. They will then be shredded.

### **Student to teacher**

- For the safety of all concerned, the complaining teacher will be interviewed by two staff members (Principal and one other) and may be asked to give a written account. Witnesses may be interviewed.
- The student concerned will be interviewed by the Principal, unless the Principal is the named person. If the Principal is the named person then the teacher will be interviewed by the Deputy Principal. The student concerned may request the presence of a third party.
- She may be asked for a written account of the incident.
- A restorative approach will be used when investigating incidents. No one will be subjected to public humiliation. The emphasis will be on seeking a change in behaviour.

- The identities of all involved will be kept confidential during each step of the procedure.
- If a further offence occurs a written warning will be given.
- A further offence will be dealt with by the Board of Management.
- Where there is disagreement about whether bullying occurred, the Principal may engage the services of a trained mediator to mediate between the student and parent(s) and the teacher. This will only happen with the permission of both parties. Records will be kept for 7 years after the student has left the school. They will then be shredded.

### **Teacher to parent**

- For the safety of all concerned, the complaining parent will be interviewed by two staff members (Principal and one other) and may be asked to give a written account. Witnesses may be interviewed.
- The teacher concerned will be interviewed by the Principal, unless the Principal is the named person. If the Principal is the named person then the teacher will be interviewed by the Deputy Principal. The teacher concerned may request the presence of a third party.
- He/she may be asked for a written account of the incident.
- A restorative approach will be used when investigating incidents. No one will be subjected to public humiliation. The emphasis will be on seeking a change in behaviour.
- The identities of all involved will be kept confidential during each step of the procedure.
- If a further offence occurs a written warning will be given.
- A further offence will be dealt with by the Board of Management.
- Where there is disagreement about whether bullying occurred, the Principal may engage the services of a trained mediator to mediate between the parent(s) and the teacher. This will only happen with the permission of both parties. Records will be kept for 7 years after the teacher concerned has left the school. They will then be shredded.

### **Parent to teacher**

- For the safety of all concerned, the complaining teacher will be interviewed by two staff members (Principal and one other) and may be asked to give a written account. Witnesses may be interviewed.
- The parent concerned will be interviewed by the Principal, unless the Principal is the named person. If the Principal is the named person then the teacher will be interviewed by the Deputy Principal. The teacher concerned may request the presence of a third party.
- He/she may be asked for a written account of the incident.

- A restorative approach will be used when investigating incidents. No one will be subjected to public humiliation. The emphasis will be on seeking a change in behaviour.
- The identities of all involved will be kept confidential during each step of the procedure.
- If a further offence occurs a written warning will be given.
- A further offence will be dealt with by the Board of Management.
- Where there is disagreement about whether bullying occurred, the Principal may engage the services of a trained mediator to mediate between parent(s) and the teacher. This will only happen with the permission of both parties. Records will be kept for 7 years after the teacher has left the school. They will then be shredded.

### **Staff to staff**

- Issues of concern regarding staff to staff bullying will be dealt with under the Board of Management's *Dignity in the Workplace* Policy.

### **Policy Awareness.**

All the school community will be made aware of the agreed policy in the following manner:

#### **Students:**

- At enrolment: each student will receive the Code of Behaviour and this will include the Anti Bullying Policy.
- Journal: Policy incorporated in the school journal.
- Classroom: Copy of the Policy on the notice board in each classroom.
- Assemblies/Class Meeting: Policy reinforcement throughout the school year.
- Anti Bullying Awareness Month.
- School web site.

#### **Parents:**

- Enrolment: at enrolment as above.
- Journal: Parents are asked to read and sign journal as above.
- Parents Night.
- School web site

#### **Staff:**

- Teaching Staff: A copy of *Dignity in the Workplace* Policy is available to all teaching staff in the staffroom.
- Non-teaching staff: are supplied with individual copies of the Policy.

**Evaluation of Policy.**

This policy will be evaluated every three years by questionnaire to all stakeholders in the school- students, parents, staff, and Board of Management.

**Policy Agreement.**

This policy was drawn up in accordance with the DES Guidelines and in partnership with, Staff, Students, Parents Association and Board of Management and the 'Cool School' Team who assist schools in dealing with bullying.