

# St. Augustine's College

## Anti-bullying policy

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of St. Augustine's 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.
  
2. The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils 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 pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
    - 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 pupils; and
    - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
  - Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
  - 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.

3. 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 and

- 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, 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.

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

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

4. 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; year heads; members of the pastoral care team; guidance counsellor; chaplain; deputy principal and principal.

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber- bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, 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.

1. Staff members share responsibility, under the direction of the principal teacher, to act in preventing bullying/aggressive behaviour by any member of the school.
2. The school promotes qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among all its members both in school and out of school.
3. The school acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual and his/her worth as a human being.
4. The school promotes habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the inter-dependence of people in group and community.
5. The school recognises the role of the other community agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying.
6. The school recognises the right of the parents to share in the task of equipping the pupil with a range of life-skills.
7. The school recognises the need to co-operate with and keep parents informed on procedures to improve relationships within the school community

8. The school takes particular care of “at risk” pupils 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.
9. The school identifies aspects of curriculum through which positive and lasting influences can be exerted towards forming pupils’ attitudes and values.
10. The school has the capacity to change in response to the pupils’ needs.
11. The school has a clear commitment to promoting equity in general and gender equity in particular in all aspects of its functioning.
12. The school disapproves of vulgar, offensive, sectarian or other aggressive behaviour by any of its members.
13. The school promotes positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among all its members.
14. The school acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment.

6. 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*) :

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.

- 1) 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).
- 2) 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).**
- 3) **The Principal or Deputy Principal will, from time to time, refer cases to be dealt with through the schools code of conduct/discipline as deemed appropriate.**
- 4) Parents or guardians of victims and bullies will be informed by the Principal or Deputy Principal earlier rather than later of such incidents to give the opportunity of discussing the matter.
- 5) 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.
- 6) It should be made clear to all students that when they report incidents of bullying they are not telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
- 7) Class tutors in consultation with the Year Head, Deputy Principal and Principal should record and take appropriate measures regarding reports of bullying behaviour in accordance with the school’s policy and code of conduct and discipline.
- 8) 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 the class tutor.
- 9) 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 class tutor who in turn informs the Principal.

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils 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 mainly during SPHE classes. Inservice 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.

## **8. Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils**

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.

## **9. 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 pupils or staff or the harassment of pupils 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.

10. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 20<sup>th</sup> January 2014

11. 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 pupils 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.

12. 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 pupils 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.

Signed: Fr. Gerry Horan OSA  
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: Ailbhe Ní Neachtain  
(Principal)

Date: 20<sup>th</sup> January 2014

Date: 20<sup>th</sup> January 2014

Date of next review: May 2015