

# St Patrick's & St Brigid's College Anti-Bullying Policy



Date adopted:  
To be revised:

## **Anti- Bullying Policy Statement.**

The aim of SPB College anti-bullying policy is to prevent bullying of any sort and to ensure that everyone can operate in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. All members of the community, including, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents should have an understanding of what bullying is and be familiar with the college's policy on bullying: therefore the aim of the policy is to help members of the college community to deal with bullying when it occurs and, even more importantly, to prevent it.

Bullying is an anti-social behaviour which affects everyone; it is unacceptable and it should not be tolerated. Everyone in the community has a responsibility to report any incident of alleged bullying that comes to their attention and these reports will always be taken seriously.

This policy is available on both college websites, and electronic shared staff area and by request from the college Secretariat.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the college's policies:  
Child Protection (safeguarding),  
Behaviour  
SEN

It is integral to the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development of pupils.

### ***Definition of Bullying.***

Bullying may be defined as any deliberately hurtful behaviour, usually repeated over a period of time and intentionally hurts another pupil or group physically or emotionally, where it is difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves, and is often motivated by prejudice. Examples of unacceptable behaviour include,

- physical assault.
- verbal abuse, by name calling, teasing or making offensive remarks.
- cyber-bullying, which is defined as the use of ICT by an individual or group in a way that is intended to upset others. Examples include using social websites, mobile phones, text messaging, photographs, video and e-mail.
- indirect emotional tormenting by excluding from social groups or spreading malicious rumours.

Bullying may involve complicity that falls short of direct participation by, for instance, manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. It may be overt and intimidatory but is often hidden and subtle. It can include actions or comments that are racist, religious or cultural, homophobic, transphobic, sexist, sexual or which focus on disabilities or other

physical attributes (such as hair, colour or body shape) or any reference to Special Educational Needs and/or disability.

The seriousness of bullying cannot be emphasised enough. Bullying is among the top concerns that parents have about their children's safety and well-being at and on the way to and from college. Bullying is also a top concern of children and young people themselves. Bullying makes the lives of its victims a misery: it undermines their confidence and self-esteem and destroys their sense of security and can be psychologically damaging. Bullying impacts on its victims' attendance and attainment at college, marginalises those groups who may be particular targets for bullies and can have a life-long negative impact on some young people's lives. At worst, bullying has been a factor in pupil suicide.

It is acknowledged that bullies may have complex reasons for their behaviour and may well need help. It should also be recognised that the consequences of being allowed to 'get away with it' can be detrimental to them as well as to their victim. All pupils deserve the opportunity to be helped to understand what acceptable behaviour is. Pupils are educated through PSE, assemblies, and across curricular areas to raise awareness, with discussions of differences between people and the importance of avoiding prejudice. There are criminal laws that apply to harassment, assault and threatening behaviour.

### ***Anti-Bullying Procedure***

#### **What to look for**

Pupils who are being bullied may show changes in behaviour, such as becoming shy and nervous, feigning illness, taking unusual absences or clinging to adults. There may be evidence of changes in work patterns, lacking concentration or truanting from college.

Members of staff and all members of the community must be alert to the signs of bullying; legal responsibilities are known and community members should act promptly and firmly against it, in accordance with college policy. Surveys have shown that in the vast majority of bullying incidents, MOST people knew that what was going on was wrong. Sometimes people, either through lethargy, peer group pressure, or tacit support for what is going on, fail to take action.

#### **What to do**

The way to stamp out bullying is for people to be aware of the issues involved, and to be clear in their own minds what action to take should cases arise:

#### **If you are the victim**

1. If you feel able to, confront the bully by verbally making him/her aware that you think that what he/she is doing is wrong.
2. Share your feelings with someone else.
3. If possible talk to a member of staff, your form teacher or your Head of Year about the incident.

If you would rather not go straight to a member of staff, talk to your friends or one of the Prefects or any trusted adult. They may well be able to advise on an appropriate course of action, or will be able to involve other people who can. There are also people outside the College who would be willing to help. Your form teacher can refer you to the college counsellor, who may also be able to help.

#### **Procedure if a pupil alleges to have witnessed bullying behaviour**

1. Support the alleged victim by offering your friendship and make it clear that in your opinion what is happening to them is wrong.
2. Encourage them to speak out on their own behalf by confronting the alleged bully, or with their permission, confront the alleged bully yourself.
3. Accompany the victim to a trusted adult, or suggest that you see their Head of Year or form teacher on their behalf.

#### **Procedure for members of Staff should you witness an incident of bullying or it is reported to you**

1. Reassure and support the pupils involved.
2. Advise them that you are required to pass details on to the relevant member of the pastoral team. (Form Tutor, Head of Year, Assistant Principal).
3. Inform an appropriate member of the pastoral team as soon as possible. Heads of Year and form teachers must record all incidents of reported bullying and ensure that Assistant Principal (Pastoral Care) is informed. The Assistant Principal (Pastoral Care) will keep a central log of all complaints or incidences of bullying and record any action the college has taken relating to this.

#### **What will happen?**

The victim will be interviewed by their Form Tutor or Head of Year, on their own, and asked to write an immediate account of events. The process for dealing with bullying will be explained clearly to them. The victim is also given the opportunity to discuss his own reactions and behaviour towards the bully. The victim is given support and advice and counselling is suggested if deemed appropriate.

Once the tutor and Head of Year are clear that a bullying offence has been committed, the bully and any others involved will be interviewed individually and asked to write an immediate account of events. The process for dealing with bullying will be explained clearly

Details of the incident will be recorded on all the pupils' files. The Assistant Principal (Pastoral Care) is copied in so that it can be recorded as a bullying incident. The pastoral team will decide on an appropriate course of action. In the first instance the tutor or Head of Year will interview the pupil or pupils whose behaviour has caused distress and give him/ them a formal bullying warning; making it clear that any further incident (or discussion about the current incident) would be considered to be further bullying. It will be made clear why the behaviour was inappropriate and unacceptable. Support and counselling will be offered. A suitable sanction may also be given.

If the Head of Year decides it is appropriate, or it is a serious offence, the Assistant Principal (Pastoral Care) may become involved and the parents of the perpetrator/s may be informed by letter or telephone. The following sanctions may be applied in accordance with the College behavioural policy.

**Formal College Warning from the Assistant Principal (Pastoral Care).** The AP will speak to the pupils involved and will contact the parents or guardians giving details of the offence and inviting them in to College to discuss the matter and to be present when their child is given a Formal College Warning. Their support for the college's actions should be enlisted if possible.

**Suspension** at the Principal's discretion (see CCMS Scheme for Suspensions and Expulsions).

**Exclusion** at the Principal's discretion (see CCMS Scheme for Suspensions and Expulsions).

These are minimum sanctions. In very serious cases it may be necessary to make a report to the Police or Social Services. However, it is the policy of the college to attempt to resolve such issues internally using our own disciplinary sanctions, unless the matter is of such gravity that a criminal prosecution is likely.

The College will raise awareness of the staff through training and take action to reduce the risk of bullying at the times and places where it is most likely to occur. The key points from this policy will be prominently displayed on College notice boards and will be discussed with pupils during PSE sessions. Anti-bullying will feature as a discussion point for Student Council and feedback will be given to form classes during PSE. It will also be revisited to all years and reinforced in other areas of the curriculum as the opportunities present themselves e.g. drama, physical education. Opportunities will also be sought to allow parents to contribute to the College's actions to prevent bullying.

Incidents of reported bullying will be followed up by form teachers and Heads of Year, to monitor that the problem has been resolved.

Records of bullying offences will be reviewed by the Assistant Principal (Pastoral Care) and the Pastoral teams regularly at Heads of Year meetings to watch for patterns and check that the policy is effective.

We are absolutely confident that the vast majority of our pupils in St Patrick's & St Brigid's College will agree with our sentiments on Bullying and support this policy to enable all children to feel happy and safe in the college environment and beyond.

Signed (Chair of Governors): ..... Date: .....

Signed (Principal): ..... Date: .....