



St. Clare'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. Clare'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*):

- Form Teacher
- Year Head
- Guidance Counsellor
- Deputy Principal
- Principal
- Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it
- Any member of staff with whom the student feels comfortable.

A student should feel comfortable reporting a bullying incident by using one, or any, of the following approaches:

- Directly approaching a teacher at an appropriate time. e.g. after class, break/lunch time.
- Handing up a note with homework or to any member of the SPHE team,
- Getting a parent to contact the school by ringing the Year head or Guidance Counsellor



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):

The policy applies –

- During school time (including breaks)
- Going to and from school
- During school tours
- During extra-curricular activities

Actions to prevent Bullying

- Our Anti-Bullying Policy is an integral part of St. Clare's College Code of Behaviour that all students are obliged to sign up.
- Supervision and monitoring of students' behaviour, including lockers, yard, corridors and areas with access to computers.
- Effective practice includes prevention and awareness raising measures across all aspects of bullying and involves strategies to engage pupils in addressing problems when they arise. In particular, such strategies need to build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils. This will be achieved through our Wellbeing programmes e.g., Webwise, Stand up programme, DCU Fuse, Pieta House Amber Flag and the Cool Schools Anti Bullying Programme. This is run each year and involves an Optimistic October for all students; the delivery of the Cool schools Anti Bullying programme for first years and a refresher class for all other years. The refresher class visits all types of bullying. This is delivered by Form teachers assisted by the guidance counsellor and Year head.
- Resulting from this is a highlighted awareness of the subject; this should also be reinforced through acts such as anti-bullying posters, charter in classrooms, noticeboard and followed up with questionnaires regularly.
- St. Clare's College seeks to use the restorative model in our whole school approach. As part of this restorative approach, we administer a sociogram each year for all students. Participation in the sociogram annually for all students, administered by the Form teacher, is key. This is in line with the holistic ethos of the schools mission statement.
- As self-esteem is a major factor in determining behaviour, St. Clare's College will, through both their curricular and extra-curricular programmes, provide pupils with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth. This may be achieved through areas such as drama, sports, music and art.
- Initiatives and programmes focused on developing pupils' awareness and understanding of bullying, including its causes and effects, should deal explicitly with the issue of identity-based bullying and in particular homophobic and transphobic bullying. RSE, PE, SPHE, CSPE and Religion all make provisions for exploring the issue of bullying.
- Prevention and awareness raising measures will deal explicitly with cyber-bullying. The best way to address cyber-bullying is to prevent it happening in the first place. Prevention and any awareness raising measures should focus on educating pupils on



appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while on-line and also on developing a culture of reporting any concerns about cyber-bullying. The school-wide approach and the role of parents is integral in this regard. In St. Clare's College, advice will continue to be given to pupil and staff. The prevention and awareness raising measures will also take into account the scope for cyber-bullying to occur as a result of access to technology through the delivery of the Garda SPHE Programme where lessons are delivered by community Gardai and Foroige Youth Justice workers. During these lessons they cover issues around personal safety and Cyber bullying.

- Our approach to tackling and preventing bullying will take particular account of the needs of pupils with disabilities or with SEN. We aim to decrease the likelihood of bullying for pupils with SEN by improving inclusion, focusing on developing social skills, paying attention to key moments such as transitioning from primary to post-primary and cultivating a good school culture which has respect for all and helping one another as central.
- At St. Clare's College in-service will be provided to all staff on the subject of bullying, this will be complemented by Optimistic October for pupils.
- Teachers can influence attitudes to bullying behaviour in a positive manner through a range of curricular initiatives. There are a number of curriculum components and programmes which are particularly relevant to the prevention of bullying and the promotion of respect for diversity and inclusiveness. The SPHE curriculum makes specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the inter-related areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships. The Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) programme provides opportunities to explore and discuss areas such as human sexuality and relationships, which has particular relevance to identity-based bullying. Additionally, we mark World Anti-Bullying Day and World Kindness Day with the delivery of an appropriately themed lesson to all year groups. This allows us to take the opportunity to raise awareness at every available opportunity.
- There is space within the teaching of all subjects to foster an attitude of respect for all: to promote the value of diversity; to address prejudice and stereotyping and to highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- The guidance counsellor also meets with first year groups to assist with making the transition to secondary school and to pinpoint any difficulties.
- Mentor system: a mentor system is in place whereby a transition year student is assigned a small number of first year students to link in with at a set time every week, this runs for all of first year and has proven very successful to date. All class prefects are encouraged and reminded to be alert at all times for any students that may be involved in intimidating behaviour. We hold a 'Tea & Talk' annually where students get the chance to link up with their buddy for a chat with some refreshments; this helps to foster respectful relationships between the senior years and the junior years in St. Clare's College and results in a feeling of belonging for all students in our school community.
- Mentor system: our sixth year students are all paired up with a teacher who is a mentor for the student. Mentors meet with students regularly throughout the year to assist students with any matters that may arise over the terms e.g., advice re; study skills, wellbeing and relationships, grades etc.
- Our student council are very active in being a constant reminder about the issue of bullying and the need to tell an adult. This is echoed at regular meetings of the council which consists of representatives of every class group. As outlined in the



Pastoral care policy the guidance counsellor will meet with the student council annually to address any issues students may have with pastoral care.

- At St. Clare's we also encourage the development of an anti-bullying charter for all classrooms.

Links to Other Policies and to Curriculum Delivery.

This policy is consistent with other policies in St. Clare's College

- Code of Behaviour
- Child Protection Policy
- Internet Safety: Acceptable Use Policy
- Health and Safety
- SPHE/RSE
- Guidance Plan
- Learning Support
- Admissions Policy

This policy links to the following Curriculum areas

- Well-being at Junior Cycle – A total of 400 hours in this area over three years in the subjects of SPHE, CSPE & PE with Short Courses completed in each subject.
- Religion: the issue of bullying is dealt with in each of three years of Junior Cycle Religion, and then at Senior Cycle through Religion Classes
- English (personal accounts)
- Well-being Module in Transition Year
- Other links could include -Transition Year ; LCVP ; Class Tutor time; Assemblies; Sociogram & the Code of Behaviour.

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):

The member of teaching staff who has responsibility for investigating and dealing with bullying is referred to as the "relevant teacher". The relevant teacher will fill in a bullying record form.

The relevant teachers in St. Clare's College are the Form Teacher, the Yearhead, the Guidance Counsellor, Deputy Principal and Principal. Alternatively, if a disclosure of bullying is made to another teacher; they are then seen to be the relevant teacher.

Procedures for Investigating Incidents of Bullying

- All reported incidents of bullying are to be noted on the Bullying Incident Report Form.
- Bullying Incident Report forms are to be filled in by the teacher to whom it was reported.



- These forms are to be presented to the Principal or Deputy Principal or Year Head who will deal with the matter, and file these forms away.
- Files are to be kept on file for 5 years after the student leaves the school.
The primary aim for the relevant teacher in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame);
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It will be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly;
- Non-teaching staff such as the secretary, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers, external supervisors will report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;
- Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible;
- Incidents are investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information.
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner;
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher;
- We may find it appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s);

Procedures for Dealing with Incidents of Bullying:

In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred:

- The parents of the parties involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken. St. Clare's College will give parents/guardians an opportunity to discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils;
- It should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied; taking ownership of their actions is the first step to ending the behaviour of the bully.
- It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school;
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved will be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable. It is hoped this will have a therapeutic effect.
- In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined



that bullying behaviour has occurred, it will be recorded by the relevant teacher in the recording template.

- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:
 - Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased; Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
 - Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable; and
 - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal;
 - Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures;

- Any reported allegations of bullying/harassment between students and staff should be dealt with directly by the Principal.
- In relation to staff to staff incidents, the matter should be referred directly to the Principal where an Incident report is to be filled out. Refer also to the ASTI / TUI Grievance procedure and the school's Dignity in the Workplace Policy.

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):

- A programme of support for pupils who have been bullied is in place. Such pupils may need counselling and/or opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed.
- A programme of support for those pupils involved in bullying behaviour is also part of the school's intervention process. Pupils involved in bullying behaviour need assistance on an ongoing basis. For those with low self-esteem, opportunities should be developed to increase feelings of self-worth. It is, therefore, important that the learning strategies applied within the school allow for the enhancement of the pupil's self-worth. Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.

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 6/10/2022 [date].

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: Padraig Groll
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: Teresa Dannel
(Principal)

Date: 06/10/22

Date: 6/10/2022

Date of next review: 6/10/2023