



November 11th 2013

Anti- Bullying Policy

As an educational community we strive to embody the values of unity, truth and love in our everyday interactions.

Good Counsel College

NEW ROSS, CO WEXFORD.
051-421182

AN AUGSTINIAN SCHOOL



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 Good Counsel 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. 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;
 - b. Effective leadership;
 - c. A school-wide approach;
 - d. A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
 - e. 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.
 - f. Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
 - g. Supports for staff;
 - h. Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
 - i. On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy. 40



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:

- a. deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
- b. cyber-bullying and
- c. 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;
- a. Initial complaints reported to: Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator forwarded to the Care team.
 - b. Investigation: Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator
 - c. Initial no-blame mediation: Anti-bullying Co-ordinator/Chaplin/Guidance Counsellor as deemed appropriate.
 - d. Unresolved bullying issues:
 - i. Year Head
 - ii. Deputy Principal/Principal.



5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber- bullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:
- the whole school, including pupils, parents / guardians and teachers are involved in the ongoing formation of the school's Anti-Bullying Ethos.
 - on admission to the school students sign an anti-bullying agreement and are informed about the School's Anti-Bullying Programme
 - the open and easy access to the Chaplain and Guidance Counsellor play a significant role in preventing bullying in the school
 - a Friendship Week (Anti-bullying week) will be co-ordinated by the Anti-bullying Co-ordinator and Student-Council each year.
 - a class tutor or other staff member administers the confidential questionnaire to each class at least once per year or more regularly on a needs led basis. This questionnaire is designed to identify and then help any students having problems with bullying.
 - the school's Anti-Bullying Policy will be circulated to new staff members in Good Counsel College
 - School training in procedures given periodically.
 - Our Anti-Bullying Policy in the Student Journal and is repeated by the class tutor at least once a term.
 - Discussion in SPHE and R.E. Classes
 - Addressed as part of the Pastoral Care system in the school (e.g. Guidance Counsellor, Chaplain, Class Teachers, Tutors, Year Heads, Home School Community Liaison Officer)
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:
- All reports of bullying will be, investigated and dealt with by our Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator and the details recorded on the standard form and forwarded to the Care Team¹. In that way it is hoped that students will gain confidence in 'telling'.
 - When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, teachers will refer cases to the Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator. The Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator will meet both parties individually to discuss the matter and to seek possible solutions with a 'NO BLAME' approach. An attempt will be made to get the perpetrator to see the situation from the target's point of view. A written record of the incident will be placed in the files of all students involved. This will be done by the Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator. (If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually and then will be met as a group.)

¹ The care team meets on a weekly basis and consist of the Principal, Deputy Principal, Chaplains, Guidance Counsellor, SEN Co-ordinator and Child Protection officer. They deal with issues, primarily of pastoral concern to students.



- If the perpetrator is involved in a further incident Step 1 above should be followed and the Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator will refer on to the Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal for further consideration.
- If it is concluded that a student has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him how he is in breach of the Code of Behaviour. His parents or guardians will be informed, the student sent home, and a meeting arranged.
- The parents of the target and the alleged bully will be informed in the first instance, and kept informed during the process.
- Follow up meetings by the Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator or School Chaplain or Guidance Counsellor will be arranged with the two parties involved separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the target is ready and agreeable. This can have a therapeutic effect.
- Where possible the necessary Counselling provision will be made within our school for both parties. Referrals will be made from the Care Team when appropriate.
- In certain cases, such as alleged cyber bullying, and mobile phone bullying for example, it may be necessary to invite the assistance of other local persons and formal agencies such as general medical practitioners, Gardaí, HSE with their social workers and community workers.
- Our anti-bullying school policy also embraces those members of the wider school community. They are encouraged to play a positive role in assisting our school to counter bullying behaviour by reporting such behaviour to parents and/or school as appropriate.

Sanctions

Students are aware that if they are involved in bullying the following will happen:

- They will be warned to stop immediately. A record will be placed in their file by the Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator.
 - If a further incident occurs involving the perpetrator the student will be referred to the Year Head or Deputy Principal or Principal as a discipline matter.
 - Their parents will be informed and the student will be sent home until a meeting with the Parents and the Year Head is arranged
 - More serious sanctions ranging from suspension to exclusion will apply to students who engage in continual serious bullying incidences
7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:

Students who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.



Victims may need counselling and opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem and to develop their friendship and social skills whenever this is needed. The learning strategies applied within our school will allow for the enhancement of the student's self-worth. Students who observe incidents of bullying behaviour will be encouraged to discuss them with their teachers. Counselling provision will be made within our school for bullies and their victims.

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 October 7th 2013

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website, is readily accessible to parents and pupils on request and provided to the Parents' Association. 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 and provided to the Parents' Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Chairperson's Signature

Date

Principal's Signature

Date

Date of Review: October Board Meeting 2014



APPENDIX

Signs and Symptoms of Bullying

Students who are being bullied may develop feelings of insecurity and extreme anxiety and thus may become more vulnerable. Self-confidence may be damaged with a consequent lowering of their self-esteem. While they may not talk about what is happening to them, their suffering is indicated through changes in mood and behaviour. Bullying may occasionally result in feelings of hopelessness, loneliness and isolation in victims. It is, therefore, important to be alert to changes in behaviour as early intervention is desirable.

A student may indicate by signs or behaviour that he is being bullied. Staff and parents must be aware of these possible signs and they should make enquiries if a student:

- Is frightened or walking/taking the bus to or from school
- Begs to be driven to school
- Changes his usual routine
- Is unwilling to go to school
- Begins truanting or educational performance declines
- Becomes withdrawn, anxious or lacking in confidence
- All of a sudden starts stammering, withdrawing, has nightmares, has difficulty in sleeping, cries frequently, is not eating, is vomiting or bedwetting.
- Attempts or threatens suicide or runs away or unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour. It may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or more especially after longer school holidays.
- Cries himself to sleep at night or has nightmares.
- Feels ill in the morning or patterns of physical illnesses (e.g. headaches, stomach aches) develop.
- Begins to do poorly in schoolwork.
- Comes home with clothes torn and /or books damaged.
- Has possessions 'missing' or spontaneous out-of-character comments about either other student's or teacher's possessions missing or damaged.
- Asks for money or starts stealing money.
- Has lunch or other monies continually 'lost'
- Has unexplained cuts or bruises
- Comes home starving (lunch money stolen)
- Becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable
- Is bullying other students or siblings
- Is frightened to say what's wrong
- Gives improbable excuses for any of the above

These signs and behaviour could indicate other problems, but bullying will be considered a possibility and will be investigated.



Anti-Bullying Standard Reporting Form

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name _____ Class _____

2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

3. Source of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es))*

Pupil concerned	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Pupil	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))*

Playground	<input type="checkbox"/>
Classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corridor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Toilets	<input type="checkbox"/>
School Bus	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern

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6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) *

Physical Aggression	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cyber-bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>
Damage to Property	<input type="checkbox"/>	Intimidation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Isolation/Exclusion	<input type="checkbox"/>	Malicious Gossip	<input type="checkbox"/>
Name Calling	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

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9. Details of actions taken

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Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

This form may be changed subject to Principal's approval.



Checklist for annual review of Anti-Bullying Policy and its Implementation

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation. The following checklist must be used for this purpose. The checklist is an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. In order to complete the checklist, an examination and review involving both quantitative and qualitative analysis, as appropriate across the various elements of the implementation of the school's anti-bullying policy will be required.

	Yes /No
Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools</i> ?	
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	
Is the Board satisfied that school staff are sufficiently familiar with the policy and procedures to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy and procedures in their day to day work?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	
Has the Board discussed how well the school is handling all reports of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and not therefore included in the Principal's periodic report to the Board?	
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	
Has the data available from cases reported to the Principal (by the bullying recording template) been analysed to identify any issues, trends or patterns in bullying behaviour?	
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	

Signed _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date _____

Signed _____
Principal

Date _____



Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the anti-bullying policy



To: _____

The Board of Management of Good Counsel College wishes to inform you that:

1. The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of _____ [date].
2. This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in **Appendix 4** of the Department's *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Signed _____ Date _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _____ Date _____
Principal

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