

St Aloysius Secondary School

Anti-Bullying Policy 2014

1. Introduction

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 Aloysius Secondary School, Cork 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 and Circular 045/2013, which were published in September 2013.

2. Rationale.

This policy aims to assist our goals at St Aloysius Secondary School, Cork which are to cater for the academic, spiritual, moral, aesthetic, interpersonal and physical needs of the student. The characteristics of the school are the pursuit of tolerance, compassion and a sense of justice and equality for all. We aim to develop each student's confidence, self-respect and respect for others.

3. People and Situations included in this policy.

The policy addresses various types of bullying behaviour, cyber- bullying, harassment and sexual harassment.

While this policy addresses issues related to bullying of students (i.e. situations in which one or more students are the victim(s) of bullying), the policy applies to teaching and other school staff, parents/guardians, and others insofar as measures under the policy relate to them.

Furthermore, at the school's discretion, the policy applies outside the school if the behaviour impacts upon any person's participation in our school.

All members of the school community are subject to this policy, particularly the following relationships:

- Student to student
- Student to any staff member (including ancillary staff, SNAs, voluntary parent- supervisors)
- Any staff member to student
- Parent to any staff member
- Any staff member to parent
- Any staff member to any other staff member

Bullying behaviours such as cyber bullying which break the law may be referred to the Gardaí.

The policy will apply to a number of time periods/activities as follows:

- School time (including break times)
- Going to and from school
- School tours/trips
- Extra-curricular activities

At other times when the behaviour adversely affects a member of the school community.

4. Definitions of Bullying

In accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2013* 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.

5. Education and Prevention Strategies

The education and prevention strategies that will be used by the school are as follows:

- The school's confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour.
- Maintain and further develop an awareness of bullying and its consequences among the student body through SPHE, CSPE, RSE, the Meitheal System, Student Council and guest speakers.
- The school has a proactive approach to the prevention of bullying; incorporating strategies into its 1st year induction programme and by the use of continuous programmes into all other years.
- There will be space within the teaching of all subjects to foster an attitude of respect for all.

6 . Process and Procedures

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:

- The primary aim in dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will 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. Class Teachers may also request statements be taken from the class as a whole.
- Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers, cleaners will be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to subject teachers, the Year head or 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.

The investigation:

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.

Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents; teachers should report the alleged incidents to the Year Head/Deputy Principal for investigation.

- Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way. Parents will be contacted before the interview, if possible.
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour; the relevant teacher will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This will be done in a calm manner; it may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s).
- If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first.
- Each member of a group shall be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teaching community.

Action to be taken

- 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 (by reference to the school policy). The school will give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils.
- Where the Relevant Teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to her how she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
- Any sanctions decided upon shall be communicated to the parents and the student by the Year Head or Deputy Principal or Principal.
- It shall 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, her parents and the school.

Follow-up

- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should 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.

Appeals

- 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.

7. Support

The school's programme of support for working with students affected by bullying is as follows:

1. Students who have been involved in bullying incidences will be advised by the Year Head of the availability of the Guidance Counsellor.
2. Both parties involved in the incident/s of bullying may receive counselling and/ or opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise her self-esteem, to develop her friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed.
3. Students who observe bullying behaviour are always encouraged to discuss it with a teacher. The assistance of the Guidance Counsellor may also be called upon by the student/ parent/ teacher if required.

8. Supervision and monitoring of Students

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 students or staff or the harassment of students 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. Communication of this policy to the relevant stakeholders.

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. It will also be inserted into the students' school journal. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills and the patron if requested.

11. Periodic summary reports to the Board of Management.

At every monthly meeting of the Board of Management, the Principal will provide a report setting out: i. the overall number of confirmed bullying cases reported by means of the bullying template in Appendix 2. ii. confirmation that all cases referred to at (i) above have been or are being dealt with in accordance with this policy. This will be recorded in the minutes of each meeting but no identifying details of students involved will be involved.

12. Regular review by the Board of Management.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. (see Appendix 5: Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation) 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 of

Education and Skills. The school will put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement identified by the review.

13. Date and ratification by the Board of Management.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____.

This policy will be implemented from _____ and replace earlier anti-bullying policies from this date.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

(Chairperson of the Board of Management)

Signed: _____ Date: _____

(Principal)

Date of next review: _____

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

To: _____

The Board of Management of _____ wishes to inform you that:

- 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].
- 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

