

St. Canice's Boys' School Anti-Bullying Policy

Bullying:

This policy is based on the DES guidelines "Countering Bullying Behaviour". It aims to produce a safe and caring environment in which all children can develop to their full potential.

St. Canice's Boys' School does not tolerate or condone bullying of any form or at any level of the school community. This policy guides action and organisation within the school for preventing and responding to bullying.

Board of Management:

The Board of Management is responsible for, and committed to, ensuring that all members of the school community are enabled to deal effectively with bullying. The Board is committed to providing time and resources for the implementation of the policy. The Board will ensure that proper supervisory and monitoring measures are in place to prevent bullying and to deal with incidents appropriately as they arise.

Scope:

This policy applies to pupils of St. Canice's Boys' School, Finglas and relates to all activities both during and outside of normal school hours.

Aims:

- To create a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teachers, pupils, parents/guardians.
- To ensure comprehensive supervision and monitoring measures through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation.
- To develop procedures for noting and reporting incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To develop procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To provide a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour.
- To work with and through the various local agencies in countering all forms of bullying and anti-social behaviour.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of school policy on anti-bullying behaviour.

Definition of Bullying:

Bullying may be defined as repeated acts of aggression; which may be verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against others.

Types of Bullying:

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| Racism – physical/verbal | Physical aggression |
| Damage to property | Extortion |
| Intimidation | Abusive telephone calls |
| Isolation | Name-calling |
| Slagging | Bullying of school personnel |
| Writing notes | Texting |
| E-mailing | Posting on social network websites |
| Posting on U-Tube | Recording images on mobile phones |

It is important not to confuse bullying with isolated incidents of aggressive or antisocial behaviour, which are not condoned but are investigated and dealt with in accordance with the school's discipline policy. However when the behaviour is systematic and ongoing it becomes bullying.

Effects of Bullying:

Pupils 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 self-esteem. While they may not

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talk about what is happening to them, their suffering is indicated through changes in mood and behaviour. It is therefore important to be alert to changes in behaviour as early intervention is desirable.

Behaviour Changes That May Be A Cause For Concern:

- Anxiety about travelling to or from school, requesting parents to drive or collect them.
- Changing route of travel.
- Avoiding regular times for travelling to and from school.
- Coming in late, going home early, etc.
- Unwillingness to go to school, refusal to attend, truancy.
- Poor attendance without any apparent cause.
- Deterioration in educational performance, concentration, enthusiasm, interest in school.
- Pattern of physical illness – e.g. stomach aches, headaches, etc.
- Unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour – it may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or more especially after long school holidays.
- Visible signs of anxiety or distress – stammering, withdrawal, nightmares, difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, bed wetting, etc.
- Spontaneous out of character comments about teachers/pupils
- Possessions missing or damaged.
- Increased requests for, or stealing money.
- Unexplained bruising, cuts or damaged clothes.
- Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is bothering him/her.
- These signs do not necessarily mean that a pupil is being bullied. If repeated or occurring in combination, these signs do warrant investigation in order to establish what is affecting the pupil.

The Victim:

Any pupil through no fault of his own may be bullied. In the course of normal play it is common for pupils to taunt and tease each other; however, at a certain point this may become a form of bullying behaviour. Pupils are very quick to notice differences in others and those pupils perceived as being different are prone to being bullied. It is noteworthy that some pupils can unwittingly behave in a very annoying manner which attracts bullying behaviour.

The Bully:

Bullying is a learned behaviour and pupils who bully tend to display aggressive attitudes combined with a low level of self-discipline. They often lack a sense of remorse and state that the victim deserves the treatment meted out. Bullies lack empathy and are unaware or indifferent to the victim's feelings. Bullies often lack confidence and have low self-esteem. Bullies are often the victims of bullying behaviour themselves.

Where does Bullying Happen?

Bullying may happen in the classroom, toilets, corridors, in the playground, on the way to/from school. It may happen under the guise of play which is particularly rough and targets an individual or groups.

Teacher Behaviour:

Teacher behaviour of a bullying nature is most likely to take place in a classroom situation, but not exclusively so, it may also take place in the school playground or sports field.

School Staff:

The school staff will foster an atmosphere of friendship, respect and tolerance within our school. Children's self-esteem will be developed through celebrating individual differences, achievements, acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour and manners and providing opportunities for success throughout the curriculum and school. Teachers will help pupils to develop empathy by discussing feelings and trying to put themselves in the place of others. Relationships with pupils will be based on mutual respect and trust so that pupils will have confidence in the school staff. Teachers will be vigilant, respond sensitively and caringly to pupils who disclose incidence of bullying and investigate all disclosed incidents of bullying.

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Teachers will discuss the school's anti-bullying policy with the pupils and use behavioural management strategies which focus on problem solving and enable pupils to take an active role in finding a solution to problems.

The formal curriculum of the school will be used to educate all pupils against bullying behaviour. Anti-bullying issues may be raised through the school religion programme, the Social Personal and Health Education programme, the Stay Safe Programme, the Walk Tall Programme, the Arts and/or Circle time.

Pupils:

Pupils are expected to be tolerant and to have mutual respect for each other. Pupils are encouraged to report incidents of bullying to their parents and teachers.

Parents:

Parents are requested to support the school's Anti-Bullying policy in the following ways:

- Encourage positive behaviour and discourage negative behaviour both at home and at school.
- Encourage children to solve difficulties without resorting to aggression.
- Encourage children to share, to be kind, to be caring, and to be understanding towards others.
- Watch out for signs and symptoms that your child is being bullied or is bullying others.
- Don't dismiss your instincts as being wrong.
- Discuss the school's anti-bullying policy with him.
- Support the school in its efforts to prevent and treat bullying.

Procedures for Reporting and Investigating Allegations of Bullying:

- Allegations of bullying should be reported to the class teacher and/or the supervising teacher for investigation. This reporting may be done by the pupil, parent or a friend.
- All reported incidents of bullying behaviour will be noted, investigated and treated as circumstances require. The investigator will calmly try to ascertain both sides of the story and will conduct all relevant interviews with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of pupils involved.
- Serious cases of bullying will be referred immediately to the Principal.
- All reports of bullying behaviour on the way to and from school will be investigated by the Principal.
- Non-teaching staff are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them or mentioned to them to a member of the teaching staff.

Responding to Bullying:

- Support will be provided for anyone who is bullied by offering them an immediate opportunity to talk about their experience with their teacher or other teacher, along with continuing support when they feel they may need it. A victim will be assured that the school community will help them and put monitoring procedures in place to safeguard them.
- The school will inform parents/guardians of what has happened and of the measures being taken to help them, encourage them to report further incidences if they occur.
- Help and support will be sought for a bully. This will include speaking with them to discover why they became involved, informing their parents/guardians and continuing to work with them in order to modify their behaviour. The bully will be helped to see things from the victim's point of view.
- The school has a duty of care for both the victim and the bully so therefore it has an obligation to address the needs of both bully and victim. Some or all of the following shall be used to address the issues of concern when a bullying incident has occurred:
 - Stay Safe Programme (As appropriate).
 - Walk tall Programme (As appropriate)
 - Circle Time.
 - Role play.
 - Drama Therapy for both victim and bully.
 - Self Esteem exercises.

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Sanctions:

The school Code of Behaviour applies to bullying and some or all of the following sanctions may apply:

- Bullies may be excluded from the playground at lunch break or subject to special monitoring procedures.
- Where the bullying continues despite repeated interventions to modify this behaviour the bully may be suspended in accordance with procedure.
- Incidents of retaliation against a pupil who reports bullying will be deemed as gross mis-behaviour and will result in suspension in accordance with procedure.
- Where a case relating to a pupil remains unresolved at school level, the matter will be referred to the Board of Management.

Reinforcement of Anti-Bullying Policy:

- Incidents of bullying will be used as opportunities for reinforcing the anti-bullying policy of the school. Follow-up meetings may be arranged to assess progress and/or restore relationships.
- Children's self-esteem shall be enhanced through our school SPHE programme. In particular the "*Stay Safe Programme*" is taught in Senior Infants, 2nd, 5th, and 6th classes and relevant elements of The "*Walk Tall*" programme are taught at all levels where appropriate.
- Children are encouraged to assert themselves in a polite and positive manner.
- Staff actively discourage casual seemingly harmless jeering of attributes e.g. shyness, clumsiness, speech, dress, accent, size, type of lunch, unusual features etc.

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed and evaluated in June 2010.

Adoption by Board of Management:

This policy was adopted by the board of management on 26th June 2008.