



St. Vincent's Secondary School Anti-Bullying Policy

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 Vincent's Secondary School 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.

The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of students 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
 - promotes respectful relationships across the school community
 - promotes effective leadership
 - promotes school-wide approach to preventing and dealing with bullying
 - promotes a shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
 - promotes the implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness 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
 - ensures effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
 - promotes supports for staff;
 - ensures consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
 - ensures on-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy. .

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 student/person (or students/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.

EXAMPLES OF BULLYING BEHAVIOURS

GENERAL

- Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc.
- Physical aggression
- Stealing or damage to property
- Name calling
- Slagging
- The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person
- Graffiti
- Extortion
- Intimidation
- Gestures
- The "look" particularly when combined with any of the other types listed above
- Invasion of personal space
- Stealing
- Actions including games which have the effect of demeaning or making another student feel uncomfortable

CYBER

- **Denigration:** Spreading rumors, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation online
- **Harassment:** Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual
- **Impersonation:** Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name
- **Flaming:** Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight
- **Trickery:** Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online
- **Outing:** Posting or sharing confidential or compromising infor-



mation or images

- **Exclusion:** Purposefully excluding someone from an online group
- **Cyberstalking:** Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety
- Silent telephone/mobile phone call
- Abusive demeaning telephone/mobile phone calls
- Abusive demeaning text messages
- Abusive demeaning email
- Abusive or demeaning communication on social networks eg Facebook/Askfm/ Twitter/Youtube or on games consoles
- Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures
- Abusive or demeaning posts on any form of communication technology
- Posting negative comments on any social media about an unnamed student, but who is identifiable by the content of the post
 - Students who post negative comments about an unnamed student who is not identifiable by the content of the post will be asked to remove the negative post comment

HOMOPHOBIC AND TRANSGENDER

- Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation
- Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation
- Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian
- Physical intimidation or attacks
- Threats

RACIAL

- Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background

RELATIONAL

This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:

- Manipulating a group to turn against an individual by making negative comments about that individual in their absence
- Malicious gossip
- Malicious isolation & exclusion
- Ignoring
- Excluding from the group



- “Bitching”
- Spreading rumours
- Breaking confidence in a way designed to undermine and belittle another
- Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear in conjunction with other bullying behaviours
- The “look” in conjunction with other bullying behaviours

SEXUAL

- Unwelcome sexual comments or touching
- Harassment

Reporting Bullying: A pupil or parent may bring a bullying concern to any teacher in the school. Individual teachers must take appropriate measures regarding reports of bullying behaviour in accordance with the school’s anti-bullying policy

The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows:

- **The Year Head is the relevant teacher.**
 - In the absence of the Year Head, the Relevant Teacher is the Principal or Deputy Principal. Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances are appropriate.
 - The Year Head may work with the tutor and/or with another teacher, as deemed appropriate, to carry out the initial investigation.
 - Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances are appropriate

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

- Friendship week to include : Lessons aimed at the prevention of bullying and specifically cyber bullying and identity based bullying
- Administer a confidential questionnaire to all students which enables the identification of unreported bullying– Sociogram. Frequency of sociogram survey to be determined by the Relevant Teacher in conjunction with Principal and or Deputy Principal.
- Full implementation of the SPHE, RSE, and CSPE programmes and curricula to ensure that school culture supports a safe social and personal environment.
- Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school to be included in student journals and displayed publicly in common areas of the school and in classrooms
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra- curricular activities. Non teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be



vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision may also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.

- Encouragement of the student prefects and the student council to become involved in contributing to a safe school environment. Buddy, mentor and other student support activities can help to support 1st year students transition confidently, and encourage a culture of peer support.
- Ensuring that students know who to tell and how to tell, eg:
 - Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
 - Hand note up with homework.
 - Make a phone call to the school or to a trusted teacher in the school.
 - Email the year head or a trusted teacher in the school
 - Get a parent or friend to tell on your behalf.

Recording of bullying behaviour

- The Board of Management must ensure that the school has clear procedures for the formal noting and reporting of bullying behaviour and these must be documented in the school's anti-bullying policy. All records must be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour must adhere to the following:
 - While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher will use his/her professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same
 - If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
 - The relevant teacher must use the recording template to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:
 - In cases where he/she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred; and
 - Where the school has decided as part of its anti-bullying policy that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

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:

Initial report/disclosure of bullying behaviour

The primary aim for the 'relevant teacher' in investigating and dealing with bullying behaviour is to resolve the issues and to restore as far as practicable the relationships of the parties involved using initially the No Blame Shared Care Approach, save where it is decided in conjunction with the Principal that the Bullying Behaviour is of such gravity as to warrant a disciplinary sanction or referral to an outside agency.

All reports of bullying will be investigated by the 'relevant teacher'

Parents and students are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible. **The school reserves the right to interview students separately or in small groups regarding alleged bullying behaviours.**

The relevant teacher will

- Decide the level at which the behaviour will be investigated. i.e. to administer confidential questionnaire or to speak with students separately or together, OR to report the behaviour immediately to the Principal/Deputy Principal.
- Challenge the behaviour as unacceptable and try to support students to resolve the issue. (no blame shared care approach)
- Seek verbal agreement re future behaviour by negotiating agreements between students and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process
- Outline a fair outcome if appropriate: e.g. an apology, return of property etc.
- Will issue a verbal warning to student/s involved to abide by the negotiated agreement. In the absence of a negotiated agreement the Relevant Teacher will issue a verbal warning to stop
- Will inform parents of all students involved at the stage where it is established that Bullying Behaviour has occurred. The relevant teacher will then make it clear to the student that she is in breach of the school's anti bullying policy and make efforts to try and get the student to see the situation from the perspective of the student being bullied.
- Will follow up progress with: victim and bully, bystanders or others involved.
- Will decide, depending on the seriousness of the behaviour, and length of time over which the behaviour had persisted, if the students involved should be referred to the guidance department for counselling.
- Will keep an informal record of the behaviour and outcome.



N.B. If the incident has not been resolved within 20 days the relevant teacher must record the behaviour on the incident template below.

Subsequent report /disclosure eg second incident by the same student/s

The relevant teacher will

- Investigate the subsequent incident.
- Inform the Principal/Deputy Principal.
- Inform parents of all students involved.
- Student and Parent/Guardians shall sign written agreement re future behaviour.
- Decide in conjunction with the Principal/Deputy Principal on an appropriate sanction which may include written warning, detention or suspension.
- The school will offer the support of the guidance counsellor or an outside agency as appropriate to both the victim and the perpetrator of the bullying behaviour.
- Monitor the situation between the students by following up progress with victim and bully, bystanders or others involved.
- Make a formal record to be kept in the student file using the incident template below.

Where bullying behaviour persists / serious incident of bullying

- The Relevant Teacher will inform the Principal/Deputy Principal and convene a meeting with the Parent/s Guardians, student and the Relevant Teacher.
- The Principal may refer the student/s to a counselling psychologist or the Garda Juvenile Liaison Officer or other support agencies.
- The Principal may refer the student/s to the Board of Management for longer period of suspension or expulsion.
- The Relevant Teacher will keep a formal written record of the outcome of this meeting in the student file.

In all situations where disciplinary sanctions are required, such sanctions are a private matter between the student being disciplined, his or her parents and the school.

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
- Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal/Deputy Principal.

Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the Principal will refer the parents as appropriate to the school's complaints procedures.

In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school will advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.



Incident Record

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 _____

* **Note:** The categories listed in the tables 3, 4 & 6 are suggested and schools may add to or amend these to suit their own circumstances.



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

- Pastoral care system
- Use of tutor/Year head structures
- Individual counselling for students where appropriate

Internal Supports available to the School in Countering Bullying

Team /Personnel Structures	Policy Documents	Material Resources
Pastoral Care Personnel Guidance and Counselling Programme RE Team Year Heads / Tutors SPHE Team LCA TY Co-ordinator All teaching Staff	Pastoral Care Policy Guidance and Counselling Plan SPHE Policy	Guidance and Counselling Programme RE Syllabus / Curriculum SPHE Curriculum LCA Programme Materials
CSPE Team	CSPE Policy	CSPE Starter Pack - syllabus and guidelines
Student Council Prefect / Mentor System Parents' Council	Anti-Bullying Policy	Cool School Lessons, booklets and support for Friendship week. Anti Bullying Seminar for Parents.

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.

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.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 13/10/2014.

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.



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' Council. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _____ Date: _____

(Principal)

Date of next review: First Term 2015