

Anti-Bullying *Draft* Policy

Rationale for the policy

Every student and staff member in the Presentation Secondary School has a right to learn and work in a safe environment. Each student has the right to an education free from fear and intimidation. This policy contributes to the care and welfare of the school community in active partnership with the whole school community as outlined in the mission statement:

- Recognising the worth of each individual
- Educating our students in a caring environment
- Promoting our cultural heritage
- Preparing the student for a meaningful and spiritual life
- Contributing to the life of the community

Members of staff accept a collective responsibility, under the direction of Management, to act in preventing bullying/ aggressive behaviour by any member of the school community. The school also recognises the important role of the parent/guardian in monitoring their child's social & moral development. Through an increased awareness of the potential damaging effects of bullying, Presentation Secondary School has developed supportive strategies for the prevention of such behaviour.

(a) Definition of Bullying

Bullying is repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against others.

Bullying can occur in the following situations: student to student, teacher to student, student to teacher, parent to teacher, teacher to parent, staff to staff and to any other member of the school community.

(b) Examples of Bullying

Person to Person

- Verbal – name-calling, mocking, making offensive remarks
- Physical violence such as hitting, pushing or spitting at another person
- Taking or spreading rumours about another person or his/her family
- Damaging or destroying another person's property, by stealing, hiding or damaging it e.g. schoolbag, locker
- Making offensive notes or graffiti about another person



- Excluding another person from a group activity
- Ridiculing another person's appearance, way of speaking, personal mannerisms or background
- Drawing attention to a person's sexual orientation and behaviour
- Drawing attention to a person's disability, ethnic or religious background.

Bullying by means of technology/social media (e.g. mobile phones and internet)

- Taking and distributing photographs and video's without permission
- Putting unauthorised material on the internet e.g. offensive posts on Facebook
- Sending unauthorised material by text message and/or e-mails
- Making any inappropriate comments on-line about another person.

PLEASE NOTE: This list is not exhaustive

(c) Reporting Bullying

1. Any student who is a witness or a victim of bullying can confide in any of the following adults in the school: Subject teacher, Class teacher, Year Head, Guidance Counsellor, Deputy Principal, Principal and any staff member of the school community.
2. If the report is verbal, the student is encouraged to submit a written account/report of the incident(s) to any of the above listed adults.
3. Any parent who has knowledge of bullying may contact Management in writing or by telephone.
4. Any report or account of an incident will be investigated thoroughly.
5. Confidentiality is of the utmost importance and is maintained in so far as the student is not in danger of being hurt or of hurting themselves or others.
6. If any degree of bullying is identified, it will be considered a breach of the Code of Behaviour and prompt action will be taken by school management.



Appropriate, parents/guardians will be notified and action will be taken in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour policy.

Reporting Bullying

All reported incidents are recorded on a Bullying Incident Report Form (BIRF) - (please see attached), which is available from the Guidance Department or Year Head and must be signed by the staff member receiving the report and the student making the report.

Records must be descriptive, objective and factual.

(e) Investigation of the Bullying:

Investigation team includes: Management, Year Heads, Guidance Counsellor

- The **BIRF** is given to the Deputy Principal, who will then give a copy to the Year Head and/or Management as appropriate.
- If necessary it will be brought to the attention of the Care Team.
- Students involved will be interviewed separately using the Restorative Practice model (please see attached).
- Witnesses may also be interviewed.
- Class observations and sociograms (questionnaires) may be used to gather evidence of the extent and nature of the unacceptable behaviour.
- The identities of all involved will be kept confidential during each step of the procedure.

(f) Resolution of the Bullying Incident

- A restorative approach will be used and every effort will be made to resolve the matter amicably. All involved will be listened to and treated sensitively and with dignity.
- The emphasis will be on seeking a change in unacceptable behaviour.
- Where necessary, support will be offered, e.g. counselling, pastoral care or referral to outside services for help.
- When the investigation is complete and a person is found to have engaged in bullying behaviour they will be given an opportunity to make an apology and they may be asked to give a written undertaking of no further bullying behaviour.
- Sanctions as per the school's Code of Behaviour will be applied where bullying continues or reoccurs. Any sanctions levied will be at the discretion of the Discipline Committee/Management and will relate to the seriousness of the incident



ere is disagreement about whether bullying occurred, the Principal may
 re services of a trained mediator to mediate between those involved.
 only happen with the permission of all involved. Records will be kept for
 fter all concerned have left the school. They will then be shredded.

(g) Bullying and the Presentation School Community

All members of Presentation School Community i.e. staff and parents are entitled to interact in an environment free from bullying and aggression. This policy applies to all relationships i.e. student/student; student/teacher; teacher/student; staff/staff; parent/teacher and teacher/ parent. All members of the school community are expected to comply with the principals of this policy document.

(h) Review of the Bullying Incident

After the bullying matter is resolved regular contact is kept with all involved in the incident to ensure that those involved feel supported and that the issue does not re-occur.

(i) Policy Awareness

All the school community will be made aware of the agreed policy in the following manner:

Students:

- Journal: Summary of Policy incorporated in the school journal
- Classroom: Copy of the Policy to be publicly displayed in the school.
- Assemblies/Class Meeting: Policy reinforcement throughout the school year.
- Anti-Bullying Awareness/Friendship Month
- School web site.

Parents:

- At enrolment: each parent(s) will receive the Code of Behaviour and the Anti-Bullying Policy
- Journal: Parents are asked to read and sign journal as above
- Parents Night
- School web site.

Staff:

Staff members are made aware of the Anti-Bullying Policy, by email, and have a role to play in review of such.



(j) Anti-Bullying Awareness Programme

- 'Cool School' friendship month
- The Cool School Relational Lessons are also taught throughout the year to various class groups.
- Anti-bullying drama theatre group invited to the school to raise awareness.
- Anti-bullying procedures and policy regularly outlined to staff and students at assemblies.
- Staff and management review the policy on a bi-annual basis.
- Ongoing teacher training in relation to anti-bullying.
- Anti bullying awareness is an important element in certain areas of the curriculum e.g. Religious Education, CSPE and SPHE.
- Anti-bullying 'Buddies Not Baddies' Programme –for year groups and parents.
- Visual displays around schools.
- Students sign Code of Behaviour (includes summary of Anti-Bullying Policy).
- Anti-Bullying Strategy Group (function: Strategies for dealing with bullying).
- Intercultural Day – Celebrating diversity in our school.

Please Note: This list is not exhaustive.

(k) Evaluation of Policy

This policy will be evaluated every two years by questionnaire to all stakeholders in the school- students, parents, staff, and Board of Management.

(l) Policy Agreement

This policy was drawn up in accordance with the DES Guidelines and in partnership with, Staff, Students, Parents Association and the Board of Management.

