



St. Louis Secondary School
Carrickmacross

Student Anti-Bullying Policy

2023



Anti-Bullying Policy

Section 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 **St. Louis Secondary School Carrickmacross** 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 and reviewed in 2019 and reviewed and ratified in 2021

Section 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 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
- Effective leadership;
- A school-wide approach;
- A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
- 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;
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
- Supports for staff;
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies);
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

Section 3

In accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* bullying is defined as follows:

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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, gender identity, racist bullying, bullying based on civil status, family status, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

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.

The list of examples below is non-exhaustive

| | |
|---|--|
| General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc. • Physical aggression • Damage to property • Name calling • Slagging • The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other material aimed at intimidating another person • Extortion • Offensive graffiti • Intimidation • Insulting or offensive gestures • Invasion of personal space • Snide comments with intent to hurt • A combination of any of the types listed • Exclusion • Deliberate spreading of rumours |
| Cyber | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denigration: spreading rumours, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation • Harassment: continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual • Impersonation; Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name • Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight • Cloning: creating fake profile to entrap someone • Trickery: fooling someone into sharing personal information |

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| | |
|---|--|
| | <p>which is then posted online</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outing: posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images • Photoshopping images with intent to harm or cause disruption to peace of mind • Doxing: publishing personal information online with a view to threaten or harass • Cyberstalking: breaching GDPR guidelines on data, e.g. Adding people to groups using their private details without their consent or ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety • Screen shooting replies to messages and posting them online • Exclusion: Purposefully excluding someone from an online group • Silent telephone/mobile call • Abusive telephone/ mobile calls • Abusive text messages • Abusive email • Abusive communication on social media networks • Abusive website comments • Abusive posts on any form of communication technology |
| <p>Identity based behaviours</p> <p>Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality legislation (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community)</p> | |
| <p>Homophobic and transgender</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spreading rumours about a person’s sexual orientation • Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation • Name calling e.g. gay, queer, lesbian... used in a derogatory manner • Physical intimidation or attacks • Threats |
| <p>Race, nationality, ethnic background and the membership of the Traveller community</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or Traveller background • Exclusion on the bases of any of the above |
| <p>Relational</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. • Behaviours include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malicious gossip • Isolation and exclusion • Ignoring • Excluding from the group • Spreading rumours • Breaking confidence • Talking loud enough so the victim can hear • Derogatory name calling |

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Section 4

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

The year head of the victim will act as the main investigator. The year head may also be supported in the investigation by other members of staff, where appropriate. These members of staff may include:

- the teacher the bullying incident was referred to,
- the year head of the alleged perpetrator(s),
- the deputy principal may also be required to assist where necessary.

If a year head is absent at the time of the investigation, another relevant teacher may carry out the investigation.

Section 5

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:

- Consultation with all partners in the school community on our approach to bullying.
- Various approved programmes which support the prevention of bullying including guest speakers and workshops e.g. 'Reim Solutions' talk for first years
- Organising a Wellbeing Week in the school every year during which anti-bullying lessons will be taught and other activities will raise awareness of bullying.
- Regular confidential questionnaire to be administered to all students once a term.
- Reminders of policy and procedures at assemblies and parent information evenings.
- Opportunities for staff training in this area e.g. Restorative Practice training
- Informing members of the school community about the safe use of the Internet. *See Appendices 1 and 2.*
- Specific school regulations relating to the use of mobile phones, recording devices and the uploading of material to the Internet. *See Code of Behaviour, Section 5.*
- Delivery of SPHE, RSE, and TY modular programmes highlighting diversity, tolerance and inclusion. Junior Cycle re specification also covers relevant topics such as diversity. Tutor and wellbeing classes can also be used to promote positive behaviour
- Student leadership roles are also important for modelling good behaviour and assisting in creating a safe school environment e.g. peer ministry, wellbeing ambassadors and the student council activities on inclusion
- Student assemblies, student journal and year group teams also promote positive behaviour messages
- The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and the monitoring of policies are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible
- Acceptable use policy
- Creative built environment which reinforces key messages on respect, positive behaviour and self-esteem, through visual displays
- School policies are available on the website www.stlouiscmx.com

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Section 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:

The primary aim for the relevant teacher in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as practicable, the relationship of the parties involved, rather than to apportion blame.

The school's procedures must be consistent with the following approach:

For Telling

Any person who is bullied or who witnesses bullying should report it to any member of staff they are comfortable talking to. Reports of such incidents will be treated in a sensitive and supportive way.

This reporting could take the form of a direct approach to a teacher, by means of the questionnaire, a note handed up with homework, a phone-call to the school office, or through a third party. Students can also use the chat function on teams to send a message to a teacher about an allegation.

For Investigating and resolving Incidents:

All reports received will be investigated thoroughly by the members of staff involved at the **earliest possible opportunity**. The year head will take responsibility for coordinating all interviews. This can be replaced by another teacher if the year head is absent.

Interviewing the victim, bystanders and alleged bully or bullies.

- 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.
- Parents/guardians and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist us in resolving and issues and restoring, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible.
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem- solving approach.
- Incidents will be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved. Where a student is being interviewed alone by a teacher/s the student will be allowed to have another person present if they wish
- All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Students who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way. Students will be encouraged to provide a written account of the incident; this may be necessary to assist the student to provide a clear record of events. At this point the student will be made aware that confidentiality may be limited and that only those who need to know will be informed.
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the year head/relevant teacher should seek answers to what, where, why, when and who. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non- aggressive manner.

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- If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved may meet as a group if it is appropriate.
- Each member of a group should be supported through possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher.
- A student who has reported bullying by another will not be expected to be brought together with the alleged bully without her permission.
- In cases where it has been determined by the year head/ relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents/guardians of the parties involved may be contacted at an early stage to inform them about the matter and explain the actions being taken (reference the school policy). We 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 our students. This may require a meeting with parent/s/ guardians
- Where the year/head relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to her that she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get to her to see the situation from the perspective of the student being bullied.
- The students involved will receive a serious talk in relation to the events and their role in them. This will also include a warning against retaliation in any form, and an agreement from the offender that this will not occur again, an apology where appropriate
- It is intended that our school community would use a restorative model of conflict resolution.

Sanctions will vary depending on the gravity of the incident and may include:

- Detention with work to complete may be given in line with the school's code of behaviour
- Suspension, which may include in-school suspension, where appropriate
- Persistent offenders may be referred to appropriate external agencies.

Follow up and Recording

In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed, the year head/ 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 practicable
- Whether the relationship between the parties has been restored as far as practicable.
- Issues will be resolved as far as practicable. If a parent has exhausted the St. Louis anti-bullying procedures the parents must be referred, 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 must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children. Parents can also contact the Gardai.

Recording Bullying Behaviour

It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents is done in an objective and factual manner.

Our procedures for noting and reporting bullying are as follows:

- Informal pre-determination that bullying has occurred
- While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the year head/relevant teacher, all information arising from this investigation will be communicated to the relevant year head or deputy principal (in the year heads absence) and

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a written record of this information will be stored in a secure folder on the year head team. This information will include details of the incident, the action taken, and any discussions involved regarding same to assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

- The relevant year head/teacher must inform the principal of all reports being investigated and determined as bullying at year head meetings.
- Incidents will be recorded on the bullying report form and stored in the year head team with office 365.
- If it is established by the year head that bullying has occurred and is continuing after 20 school days, the year head will record this on the bullying record form. The principal and deputy principal should be made aware if this situation occurs.
- Due consideration will be given to who has access to these records and how long they will be retained.

Section 7

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

In school supports which are provided for pupils affected by bullying and designed to raise their self-esteem to develop friendships, social skills and build resilience include the following:

- The person investigating will keep in contact with the victim to offer support and to ensure that there is no retaliation.
- Student care team who may identify students who may require targeted intervention.
- NCSE National Council for Special Education
- Reinforcement of messages around cyber safety and digital citizenship to parents and students through talks, expert guest speakers, workshops
- Class teacher/ year head, guidance counsellor, chaplain
- Peer ministers
- Wellbeing ambassadors
- Wellbeing week/ day/ activities
- Tutor class
- Individual bonding days
- Counselling will be offered to victims of bullying.
- Bystanders will be encouraged to discuss incidents with their year head or class teacher.
- Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.

Referral of serious cases to the HSE

In relation to bullying in schools, Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011 (Children First) and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools provide that in situations where "the incident is serious and where the behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive, the school must consult the HSE Children and Family Social Services with a view to drawing up an appropriate response, such as a management plan".

Serious instances of bullying behaviour are, in accordance with the Children First and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, referred to the HSE Children and Family Services and/or Gardaí as appropriate. The principal will list the alleged bullying behaviour under section 3 of the Child Oversight report.

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The Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools also provide that where school personnel have concerns about a child but are not sure whether to report the matter to the HSE, the Designated Liaison Person must seek advice from the HSE Children and Family Social Services.

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 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.

Once in every school term the principal will provide the Board of Management with a report outlining the number of bullying cases recorded since the previous report and confirmation that all cases are being dealt with in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy.

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' Association (where one exists). A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: _____

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _____

(Principal)

Date: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 1

Staying safe online

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Advice for Parents /Guardians

Access to the internet

Students are not allowed to have unsupervised access to the internet in school. Additionally, many inappropriate sites are automatically blocked. Outside of school, it is a matter for parents/guardians to determine the level of supervision required when students access the internet. Where wi-fi is available, please bear in mind that most mobile phones can access the internet in this way.

Responsible Sharing

Explain to your daughter that once she posts something online, it will still exist somewhere out there in cyberspace even if she takes it down later. Explain to her that “posting” material online means “publishing” online and that the laws against defamation apply. If there is something your daughter wouldn’t want published on the front page of a newspaper, then she should not post it online, where it could come back to haunt her later.

Cyber-bullying

This is a relatively new form of bullying which now takes place on social networking sites, by email and by text. It includes

Abusive messages or “slagging” online

Offensive comments on videos or posts

Spreading rumours online

Hacking online accounts

Posting offensive images

It’s a good idea to ask your daughter if she has experienced cyber-bullying. If she has experienced abusive or offensive behaviour online she should take screenshots of the material, save and date it, and keep as evidence. She can then follow the reporting procedure on the specific social media site.

Remind her not to send messages when angry and to be careful about their wording. When we send written messages, the usual body language and verbal cues are missing. This makes it easy to misinterpret what is said.

Privacy

Parents can’t always be there to monitor their daughter’s internet use, so it can be helpful to go over privacy settings for social networking sites together. It’s a good idea to encourage your daughter to change her privacy settings so that only her close friends can see what she posts online. Privacy

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settings are especially crucial when contact information and photos are posted. Young people's mobile phone numbers and postal addresses should not be shared online.

Not only do young people need to learn to protect themselves online, they also need to learn to respect the privacy of the people around them. When your daughter shares information and photos, it can also mean that photos of family members and friends are also made public.

Remember that our school's **Code of Behaviour Section 5** states that

"A mobile phone or any other device must never be used for taking either photographs or movie clips or for recording sound without the authorisation of the principal."

And

"Students must never upload recorded material of members of the school community to any Internet site without the permission of those involved."

Passwords

Passwords should be kept strictly private. Remind your daughter to always log out of websites.

Strangers

Remind your daughter that strangers she may meet online are not always who they claim to be. She should be careful with personal information she shares with strangers online.

Spam and Scams

Remind your daughter that not everything she reads on the internet is true. Also, when signing up for competitions or for subscriptions, services that may appear at first to be free of charge may in fact involve hidden fees. They may also require the disclosure of personal information.

Appendix 2

Staying safe online

Advice for Students

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Be cyber-safe

Once information or pictures are posted on line, you have lost control of them. They can be copied, changed or manipulated by others without your permission.

The web is **NOT** a closed network of friends. Assume everything is public unless you are certain it isn't. Opting for "private" doesn't always mean that only your friends can see your profile. It may mean that anyone can see it but only your friends can post comments.

Know who can get to your personal information. Keep your password a secret. Don't even tell your best friend.

Be careful not to post personal information that might lead to you being identified by a stranger, e.g. names, pictures, addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, name of sports clubs and schools. Such info can be gathered to harm you or others or to find you offline. Use a nickname instead.

Only post info you'd be happy for **anyone** to see, e.g. your parents, teachers.

Remember anyone can create a user profile **pretending** to be someone else. Remember this when surfing, sharing information, chatting with "friends" or playing games.

Don't open files or emails from people you don't know.

Never meet someone you met online without your parents/guardians being with you.

Bullying can happen on line or by phone to anyone. If you are being bullied, remember it is not your fault. People do it because they think they won't be caught or because they don't understand the damage they can do to others. Always tell someone you trust such as a parent or teacher.

Cyberbullies can be traced. Online bullying is illegal and Internet providers are obliged to inform the Gardai when they receive complaints.

Don't make comments on sites which ask you to rate someone, particularly sites that relate to physical appearance or ethnic origin. Think how you might feel if it happened to you.

Treat others with respect, online and off. If you wouldn't say it face-to-face, don't say it online or by text.

Don't spread rumours about others or share their secrets, especially their contact details or passwords.

Creating videos that ridicule others is cyber-bullying and is very damaging. Don't do it.

Never reply to upsetting or frightening messages. The sender wants a reply. Don't give them that satisfaction. Keep messages as evidence, note the date they were received, and talk to an adult.

Get an adult to report nasty stuff to the Internet Provider by writing abuse@ and then the host name, e.g. abuse@hotmail.com

Your mobile phone

Never leave your phone lying around.

Don't give your phone number to just anyone.

When you answer the phone, just say "Hello", not your name.

Use your voicemail to vet your calls. If you don't recognise the number, let it divert to voicemail.

Don't leave your full name on your voicemail greeting. Get an adult to record your greeting. Their voice may stop nuisance callers.

If you get abusive or silent phone calls, don't hang up immediately. Instead, put the phone down and walk away for a few minutes. Then turn the phone off. If the calls continue, or scare you, make a note of the time and date and tell an adult. Report such calls to the Gardai. Almost all calls can be traced. You can ask the phone company to give you a new number for free if you are being bullied or harassed.

Don't respond to nasty text messages. Save them and note the date they were received. If they upset you, tell an adult and report them.

You are responsible for your own behaviour. Be sure not to upset others or cause them to be bullied by someone else.

