



Anti-Bullying Policy

Sandymount Park Educate Together Secondary School offers parents the choice of an education based on the inclusive values of respect for difference and justice and equality for all. In our school, every child will learn in an inclusive, democratic, co-educational setting that is committed to enabling and supporting each child to achieve their full potential while at the same time preparing them to become caring and active members of society. *Adapted from Educate Together Mission Statement*

Ratified: August 2018, Reviewed and updated April 2021
Next Review date: December 2022

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 Sandymount Park Educate Together 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.

Introductory Statement

- The Sandymount Park ETSS school community believes that each student has a right to an education free from fear and intimidation.
- The school regards bullying as a serious infringement of individual rights and a serious threat to the self-esteem and self-confidence of targeted persons. Therefore, it does not tolerate bullying of any kind.
- Every report of bullying is treated seriously and dealt with, having due regard for the wellbeing of the targeted student(s), or teachers and the alleged bully/ies.
- A Student Support team, made up of staff members, exists to cultivate an environment free from bullying; whilst class teachers, Class Tutors, Progress Leaders and management deal with bullying incidents, should they occur.
- The immediate priority, should a bullying incident occur, is ending the bullying and protecting the person(s) being targeted while avoiding any consequent negative repercussions.
- All students, teachers, non-teaching staff, management and parents/guardians are expected to lead by example and are expected to contribute to the creation and maintenance of a safe environment in the school. On becoming aware of any instance of bullying, in or outside the school, involving members of the school community they should notify a responsible adult.
- This policy was drafted by Paula Mulhall (Principal). It was then circulated to the staff and will be circulated to both students and parents for input. Based on the inputs of staff, students and parents, this Policy will be finalised before being sent to the Board for ratification.

Scope

- The policy deals primarily with any form of bullying – Physical, Social/Relational, Emotional (which is also 'mental', 'psychological'), Verbal and Cyber – of any person in our school community.
- The policy applies to a variety of time periods/activities. These include class times (including break times), going to and from school, school outings and trips, corridors and extra-curricular activities. Furthermore, the policy applies outside the school if the behaviour impacts on any person's participation in our school.



- It deals with negative behaviours and attitudes which arise or occur in school and which affect the progress and sense of emotional wellbeing of students or other people at the school. The policy will outline the necessary steps to be taken when a bullying incident is reported.
- All members of the school community are subject to this code, particularly the following relationships:
 - Student to Student,
 - Student to any Staff member,
 - Staff member to Student,
 - Parent to Staff member,
 - Staff member to Parent,
 - Staff member to Staff member

Rationale

- Our school aims to provide the highest possible standard of education for all our students. A secure and stable learning environment is an essential requirement towards this goal. Bullying behaviour, by its very nature, undermines and dilutes the quality of education and imposes psychological damage. Therefore, it must be positively and firmly addressed through a range of school-based measures and strategies by which all members of the school community are empowered to act effectively in dealing with this behaviour.
- Both the staff and management of Sandymount Park ETSS consider this to be both a priority and necessity as our school community expands.
- Involving all members of the school community in the development, formulation and review of this policy promotes a sense of partnership, ownership and shared responsibility for implementation.

Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school

This policy was developed with regard to the **ET Charter**¹ which includes the following statement:

“Children of all social, cultural and religious backgrounds have a right to an education that respects their individual identity whilst exploring the different values and traditions of the world in which they live.”

And the **Mission statement**² which includes the following statement:

“In Educate Together schools, every child will learn in an inclusive, democratic, coeducational setting that is committed to enabling and supporting each child to achieve their full potential while at the same time preparing them to become caring and active members of a culturally diverse society.”

¹ <http://www.educatetogether.ie/educate-together-charter-2015>

² <http://www.educatetogether.ie/about/mission-and-values>



Goals/Objectives

- To ensure that students can learn, and staff can work in a supportive, caring and safe environment, without fear of being bullied.
- To raise awareness of bullying as an unacceptable form of behaviour with school management, teachers, non-teaching staff, students and parents/guardians.
- To create a school ethos that acknowledges, accommodates and respects a diversity of people including with regard to issues of belief systems, nationality, ethnicity, colour, disability, gender, gender identity and sexual orientation.
- To take practical actions to prevent incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To create a school ethos which encourages students to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To take a practical approach whereby bullying behaviour is dealt with effectively, fairly, and in a manner which will benefit the victim through the acquisition of skills to counter bullying behaviour and which will benefit the bully by helping them through guidance and discussion, to see the anti-social, counter-productive nature of this type of behaviour.
- To develop procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To develop support structures for those affected by or involved in bullying behaviour.

Key measures

Definition: What is bullying?

Bullying is the repeated and deliberate use of any type of aggression, verbal, non-verbal or physical, generally involving an imbalance of power, and aimed at hurting another person. It can be conducted by an individual or a group. While a perpetrator may get pleasure from bullying, it results in pain, distress and fear in the targeted person. Bullying can be targeted against race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, social status, faith or different ability. It does not just affect the bully and the person being bullied. It damages the atmosphere in a class and the climate of a school.

Bullying needs to be distinguished from conflict and assault. In conflict, there is no imbalance of physical, social or emotional power and the two opponents can be considered equal. Assault happens when aggressive behaviour occurs once-off without becoming habitual.

Bullying can take many forms including:

- **Emotional:** Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting (deliberately hiding books, damaging personal belongings, threatening and rude gestures...), manipulating, using coercion to comply, publicly humiliating, inciting others to bullying behaviour
- **Relational/Social:** is the systematic diminishment of a bullied child's sense of self through ignoring, isolating, excluding and shunning



- **Exclusion:** Saying nothing, ignoring, preventing someone from participating in school life, silencing, being dismissive, ostracising, isolating a person, can be accompanied by insulting written remarks either in the form of notes or graffiti.
- **Verbal:** Name calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing, personal remarks aimed at undermining confidence, intimidation by making threats etc.
 - **Name Calling:** Persistent name calling of a hurtful, insulting or humiliating nature, often referring to physical appearance or academic ability, and repeatedly directed at one individual.
 - **Teasing:** When good-natured banter extends to personal remarks about appearance, clothing, personal hygiene, ability, gender orientation or involves references of an uncomplimentary nature to members of one’s family, it assumes the form of bullying.
- **Damage to property:** results in damage to clothing, school books and other learning material, interference with or pilfering of contents of schoolbags etc.
- **Physical:** Any use of violence, pushing, kicking, punching etc and other unwanted forms of physical contact including ‘play fighting’.³
- **Extortion:** Demands being made for money often accompanied by threats. Victims may also be forced into theft on behalf of the bully.
- **Intimidation:** Victims may be intimidated by use of aggressive body language and tone of voice. Raised eyebrows in a classroom when a contribution is made by the victim.
- **Against disability:** Name calling, comments on appearance, ability, achievement levels
- **Racist:** Racial taunts, offensive/racist graffiti, gestures, hurtful jokes, inciting others to be racist, wearing provocative clothing or badges
- **Homophobic/Transphobic:** Use of homophobic/transphobic language or graffiti, making derogatory comments about sexuality, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation or appearance
- **Sexual:** Unwanted sexual contact or comments, sexually abusive comments/images, against any gender, any person of any gender identity or sexual orientation, offensive sexist graffiti with sexual content, images with sexual content
- **Text and cyber:** A form of social, psychological or verbal abuse that can be carried out by one person or a group of persons through the use of ICT, including social media, iPads and mobile phones

Diversity and Inclusion of the LGBT Community

Sandymount Park ETSS recognises the diverse community within which it is situated. We recognise the importance of the student, staff member or parent feeling accepted and valued as a member of the community, regardless of their sexual orientation, identity or gender.

³ Measures taken in self-defence, must be proportionate and unavoidable, in order not to attract sanctions. If possible, a student in danger of, or experiencing a violent act, should leave the scene as soon as possible and seek the assistance and support of an adult



In our day-to-day interactions, this is respected in many ways including:

- use of preferred pronouns
- preferred pronouns on the roll list
- respect for differing gender expressions
- choosing diverse, inclusive material for subject planning, being aware of heteronormativity which can pervade resources available to teachers
- an awareness of segregation e.g. “teams boys versus girls”
- an inclusive, positive environment where, should a student feel uneasy, they can approach a peer, teacher, tutor, mentor, progress leader or deputy principal/principal
- an openness and willingness to learn about sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and expression

Actions to prevent bullying behaviour

Sandymount Park ETSS takes a preventative approach to bullying. A positive school climate that focuses on respect for the individual along with a strong sense of community and cooperation between students, parents, staff and board of management is promoted. Actions to prevent bullying behaviour include:

Publishing and Publicising an Anti-Bullying Policy

- A Student Charter on Anti-Bullying will be generated annually by students in the first term.
- This will be visible in the classrooms and other public spaces.
- It will be published on the school website, in the students’ Journals (from 2019) and referenced in the Code of Behaviour, the Child Protection Policy and in the School Plan.
- The Anti-Bullying Policy may be promoted at various occasions e.g. parents’ nights, first year enrolment and open nights.

Supervision and Monitoring

- The Supervision Plan shall be cognisant of the entire school site and seek to ensure maximum security, within our available resources.
- Staff will observe students for signs of the effects of bullying.
- A questionnaire may be regularly given to students. This will give students an opportunity to voice concerns. Students will be given the opportunity to give feedback by participating in surveys and Anti-Bullying programmes.
- Social networking sites will to be blocked. This does not apply to O365. The Anti-Bullying Policy will operate in conjunction with the school’s Acceptable Usage Policy.



Student Involvement

- In the future, it is proposed that senior students will assist newcomers to the school through a “mentor” programme.
- Students will play an important role in both the organisation and implementation of themed weeks e.g. Safer Internet Week/Diversity/ Friendship/ Mental Health Weeks.
- Students have a daily responsibility in the implementation of this policy and are encouraged to lead by example, to be observant, and keep reporting incidents of bullying behaviour.

Students will play an important role in the development of anti-bullying strategies for individuals and the school as a whole, with the Student Support team

Students are supported in developing skills for resilience by questioning the bully and standing up for themselves and others, thus becoming resistors and defenders instead of remaining passive bystanders to bullying behaviour.

Inclusion in the Curriculum

- **SPHE/CSPE/Ethical Education:** Anti-bullying awareness materials will be embedded across several subject areas.

Steps to be taken in dealing with bullying incidents

When a teacher realises that an incident of bullying appears to have occurred, they should:

- Complete the ‘*Incident Report Form*’ (Appendix 1). This document details the source of
 - i. the information and the nature of the alleged incident.
 - ii. Inform the Class Tutor(s) and Progress Leader (Future).
- Investigate the incident, documenting all actions in the ‘*Action Taken Form*’ (Appendix 2).
- These actions may include interviews with the persons involved, class surveys, all forms of communication with parents or other staff, referrals and sanctions imposed. This form also requires the teacher to note any follow-up actions that have been made.
- Whilst initial efforts to resolve the problem will take the form of Restorative Practice, the school reserves the right to use other sanctions if need be, in accordance with the code of Behaviour.
- Both forms must be given to the DP now (and Progress Leader in the future) in all circumstances. They will copy, distribute and file them.

IMPORTANT: If the teacher believes that the investigation needs to be completed by someone with more authority or a broader perspective, they can pass the documents (and thus the investigation) on to the Class Tutor. In more serious/complicated cases the investigation can be passed on, in a similar way, to the Progress Leader, Deputy Principal and Principal, in that order.



- Records of bullying incidents will be kept in this school in accordance with the Data Protection Policy.

Implementation Arrangements, Roles and Responsibilities

The Anti-Bullying Policy shall indicate the individual roles, responsibilities and obligations of staff, students and parents. These roles and responsibilities shall be clearly outlined to existing staff and shall be communicated to all new staff, parents and students at induction.

Implementation

The people who have responsibility for implementing each action and their roles are outlined as follows:

- The Principal and DP shall be responsible for the implementation of the Anti-Bullying Policy. They will ensure that the following actions are taken: student assemblies, induction of new staff and students, correspondence with parents, school website. These will ensure that the policy is accepted and widely recognised by the school community.

Roles and responsibilities

Non-Staff

- **Student:** The student will have the responsibility of promoting an atmosphere of respect in the school and of complying with the Anti-Bullying Policy. The student will also have the responsibility of reporting incidents of bullying to which they have been subjected or that they have witnessed.
- **Parent/Guardian:** The parent or guardian will have the responsibility of promoting communication in an atmosphere free from bullying behaviour, with a duty of upholding the recommendations within the policy and accepting the sanctions held within the Code of Behaviour. Where incidents of bullying are occurring to their child, they will have the responsibility of reporting this to the relevant teacher. The parent/guardian will have the responsibility of signing the Anti-Bullying Policy and Code of Behaviour, along with their child and therefore agreeing to be bound by it.

Staff

Through our everyday activities, all staff will promote the Anti-Bullying Message and will praise and encourage co-operative, caring behaviour. Staff will promote positive relationships by showing, through their own behaviour, that it is better for everyone to respect and care for each other. Staff will also do their best to provide an environment where children feel accepted and valued and will promote anti-bullying strategies across the academic and ethical curriculum.



- **All teachers:** Teachers will promote the Anti-Bullying Policy and be constantly alert for any bullying behaviour. When incidents of possible bullying do occur, cases are dealt with by the teacher who first becomes aware of the incident. They must record all incidents in the Incident Report Form and Action Taken Form. This written report shall be submitted to the DP (and Progress Leader in the future). The subject teacher should inform the Class Tutor and seek their support if necessary.
- **Ethical Education/SPHE teachers:** They are responsible for delivering the agreed AntiBullying programme to students.
- **Class Tutor:** The Class Tutor will maintain an overview of the situation in each class by staying in contact with subject teachers. They shall assist the subject teacher where necessary in the investigation and resolution of issues. In this case they must take over the process. They may seek the assistance of the Progress Leader if necessary.
- **Student Support Team:** The Student Support Team shall be responsible for developing an Anti-Bullying strategy for the school with regards to policy, procedures, practices and the physical environment. They will also promote an anti-bullying philosophy and emphasise the importance of reporting. The team will run annual awareness activities to enable the publicity of the anti-bullying policy in the school.
- **Progress Leader:** Progress Leader will be responsible for the copying, distribution and filing of information regarding all reported incidents. They will only become involved in the investigation of incidents; the disciplining of students and contact with parents, when a case has exceeded the responsibility of the class teacher.
- **Guidance Counsellor:** They shall be responsible for the specialist support of both the injured party and the accused and shall be a member of, and supported by, the Student Support Team.
- **Deputy Principal:** The DP shall have responsibility for the implementation of the policy in the secondary school including its publicity at staff meetings, parent teacher meetings and assemblies. He/she may carry out bullying surveys as needed. They shall also liaise with staff should incidents of bullying behaviour occur. They will only become involved in cases which have exceeded the responsibility of the Progress Leader.
- **Principal:** The Principal shall have overall control and responsibility for the implementation of the policy, as well as a responsibility to induct new staff. They will also be responsible for its ratification and will only become involved in cases which have exceeded the responsibility of the Deputy Principal.
- **Other staff members:** shall have the responsibility of reporting all incidents of bullying behaviour that they have witnessed or are aware of.

Ratification & Communication

The following consultation process will follow the writing of this initial draft:

Staff: A staff meeting will be called to discuss teachers' attitudes to the draft, which will be sent via O365. Teachers are invited to submit changes, which will then be considered.



Students: Will read and discuss the draft.

It is important that each student can identify with, understands and is familiar with the Policy.

Parents/Guardians: A copy of the draft policy will be sent to the Parent Association, in order to ascertain their views and suggested alterations.

Prospective and existing parents/guardians and students will be informed of the Anti-Bullying Policy. The parents/guardians and students will be asked to sign the Anti-Bullying Policy to indicate that they understand, support and accept it.



Implementation Date

27th August 2018

Monitoring the implementation of the policy

The implementation of the policy will be monitored by looking at the records of how the school has dealt with cases of bullying. The Student Support Team will do this annually and suggest changes if appropriate.

To facilitate this process:

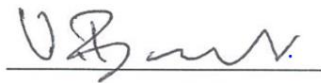
- Student reflective questionnaires may be distributed by the Deputy Principal (DP) or Class Tutors if necessary.
- A file/folder containing blank incident report forms will be located in the staff room for teachers to fill in. Completed forms will be stored securely in a dedicated folder in the office.
- Staff will be reminded of carrying out the surveys by the DP beforehand or at staff meetings.

Reviewing and evaluating the policy

The policy will be reviewed and evaluated annually to ensure it is being adhered to and that it continues to meet the needs of the school. On-going review should be in line with any changing information or regulations and feedback from parents/guardians, students, staff members and others. The policy will be revised as necessary in the light of such review and evaluation and within the framework of school planning.

Reviewed and updated following consultation with the Student Council, Board of Management and Parent Association in April 2021

To be Reviewed: December 2022



Vanessa Barcroft,
Chairperson BOM



Paula Mulhall
Principal



Appendix 1

Bullying Incident Report Form

Source of Report:

Parent Student Staff-Member Survey Other

Date:

Name of Reporting Person (if applicable):

If Staff member:

If Pupil:

Class:

If someone other than a Staff Member or Student:

Name:

Phone:

Address

Details of Alleged incident:

Location:

Date:

Time:

Students Involved:

Name:

Class:

Others who were there:

Name:

Class:

Initial Details of Incident:

Action taken will be outlined on accompanying sheet



