



Ursuline College Sligo

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ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Within the context of the Religious and Educational Philosophy of Ursuline schools and the Mission Statement of Ursuline College, an Anti-bullying Policy has been formulated.

The Board of Management of Ursuline College has adopted the following Anti-Bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall Code of Behaviour. 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 is committed to providing a safe positive learning environment for its students, where each person is respected and can work towards achieving her full potential. The Board recognises the serious nature of bullying and the negative impact it can have on the lives of students and is therefore fully committed to the exercise of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour.

This policy fully complies with the requirements of the **Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2013**.

Definition of bullying:

Bullying is repeated inappropriate behaviour, direct or indirect, whether verbal or non-verbal, physical or psychological, conducted by one or more persons against another or others, which undermines the individual's right to personal dignity and well-being. Bullying is behaviour which is intentionally aggravating and/or intimidating.

Bullying and intimidating behaviour includes:

- Physical contact which intimidates or harms another person
- Humiliation through name-calling, malicious gossip, rumour, innuendo regarding a student's personal appearance, personal or family reputation, academic ability etc.
- Damage to, or interference with, another person's property, work or locker Verbal abuse, anonymous or otherwise
- Deliberate exclusion, isolation, or any other forms of relational bullying
- Identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying/transphobic bullying or racist bullying
- Bullying based on a person's membership of the Travelling community, a minority religious faith, an ethnic minority or migrant group or any other ethnic group
- Bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs
- Aggressive or obscene language
- Unwelcome phone calls, text messages or emails.
- Threats including demands for money
- Cyberbullying: the use of the internet or electronic technology to intimidate or comment unfavourably on another person. This may include:-
 - Placing or liking offensive or hurtful comments on social media e.g. Snapchat, Instagram.

- Posting photos of a person without their consent
- Posting direct or indirect comments or captions which purposely cause offence to another person
- Accessing another person's account without their permission
- Using another person's account to send messages

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour do not fall within the definition of bullying, but will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Code of Discipline.

However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where this message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people, will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

Procedures should bullying occur in the school

- In the event of (a) an incident being brought to the attention of a member of staff (b) a staff member becoming aware of an incident, the matter will be dealt with immediately.
- The staff member will inform the Class Tutor who will in turn inform Year Head and/or Deputy Principal/ Principal.
- The staff member will document the details of the bullying incident.
- Every allegation of bullying will be treated seriously and investigated thoroughly in the following manner:
 - The parents of all students involved in a bullying incident will be contacted.

Appropriate personnel will interview all of the students involved in the bullying incident.

1. Restorative Justice Practice will be used as far as possible in dealing with incidents of alleged bullying.
2. The alleged victim and alleged perpetrators will be spoken to and encouraged to solve the problem.
3. The alleged victim and alleged perpetrators will be asked for a written account of the incident under investigation. Written accounts may also be sought from bystanders.
4. Information relating to the bullying incident will be shared with relevant staff.
5. A record will be kept of all reported incidents and of the procedures followed.
6. Where appropriate, the parents/guardians of the pupils involved will be invited to the school to meet with the Year Head and/or Principal/DeputyPrincipal

- Following thorough investigations of the bullying incident, a judgement will be made on the most effective way of dealing with the incident.
 - Where the incident is deemed to be minor, the perpetrator will be given a verbal warning to stop the inappropriate behaviour.
 - Where the incident is deemed to be more serious or the student has failed to respond to other forms of intervention for repeated misbehaviour, appropriate sanctions will be imposed.
 - These may include:
 - (a) A contract of good behaviour
 - (b) School community service
 - (c) Withdrawal of privileges

In serious cases of bullying, Suspension or Expulsion may be imposed.

In cases of extreme bullying where behaviour is regarded as possibly abusive, the DLP may need to make a referral to Tusla and/or An Garda Síochána., as required under Children First Guidance 2017.

- Students involved in bullying incidents will be offered counselling where appropriate.
- Students' behaviour will be monitored by relevant staff.

Parents' Role

Parents have a vital role to play in supporting the college in implementing its anti-bullying policy. They are strongly advised to contact the school if they believe that their daughter is being subjected to bullying behaviour and to keep a record of such incidents.

The following behaviour **may** suggest that a pupil is being bullied:

- + Losing interest or enthusiasm for school
- + Anxiety about travelling to or from school
- + Unexplained mood changes possibly before school restarts
- + Frequent minor illnesses
- + Disturbed sleep
- + Unexplained damage to property
- + Unexplained cuts or bruises.

This is not an exhaustive list

Students' Role

Ursuline College encourages students to report incidents of bullying and intimidation. The reporting of incidents of such behaviour is considered to be responsible and caring behaviour and in keeping with the ethos of Ursuline education. Any reports of alleged bullying behaviour will be treated confidentially. Students and their parents sign the Anti-bullying charter in the student's homework journal in September of each year.

Bystanders

Bullying situations usually involve more than the bully and the victim. They may also involve bystanders - those who watch bullying happen or hear about it. Depending on how bystanders respond, they can either contribute to the problem (joining in the bullying, passively accepting the bullying or encouraging the bully by laughing or making comments that further stimulate the bully) or they can contribute to the solution (getting help from an adult, reporting bullying incidents). Bystanders rarely play a neutral role, though they may think they do. The role of the bystander therefore in bullying prevention can be powerful.

Duty of Care

Ursuline College is mindful of its obligation to protect all the students in its care from bullying or intimidating behaviour, and will work proactively as far as it can to ensure that bullying does not take place.

This policy needs to be read in conjunction with the school's Code of Discipline.

The Anti-Bullying policy will be reviewed on a regular basis.