

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.

## **St. Vincent's Anti-Bullying Policy**

### **Introductory Statement**

The staff of St. Vincent's accepts a collective responsibility, under the guidance of the Principal, to act in preventing bullying, aggressive, harassing behaviour by any member of the school community. The school recognises the role of the entire school community in identifying and reporting bullying behaviour, and acknowledges its own role in taking appropriate action when bullying behaviour becomes apparent.

Every person, student, staff member and parent in St. Vincent's is entitled to respect and to be free of any type of bullying. The school will be proactive to ensure, as far as possible, that bullying does not take place. The reporting of bullying incidents is responsible behaviour.

### **Scope**

While the policy addresses issues related to bullying of students (i.e. situations in which one or more students are the victim(s) of bullying), the policy applies to teaching and other school staff, parents, guardians and others insofar as measures under the policy relate to them. It is acknowledged that the procedures for dealing with staff-staff incidents may be different and in this regard, management will refer to relevant Employment Equality Acts.

The policy will apply to the following time periods/activities:

- Within school time,
- Going to and from school,
- School tours/trips,
- Extra-curricular activities,
- Where a bullying incident is disclosed to the school.

Furthermore the policy applies outside the school if the behaviour impacts on any person's participation in our school.

### **Rationale**

1. This policy has been formulated in order to create a community that respects the rights of all its members and ensures that all students can learn in a safe and caring environment.
2. The BOM has a statutory obligation to ensure that a policy is in place that reflects the principles and values of the religious and educational philosophy of the school.
3. The role of all members of the school community-management, teaching, secretarial and auxiliary staff, parents and students is to care for each other and to provide everyone with a safe environment.
4. By law it is the responsibility of schools to develop an Anti-Bullying policy.

## Mission Statement

St. Vincent's school aims to provide a quality catholic education for all, in the tradition of Edmund Rice, which promotes leadership, fosters community and respects diversity.

Bullying damages these relationships. This school is committed to creating an environment where bullying is not accepted or tolerated.

### Goals/Objectives

1. To create a school ethos which encourages students to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour,
2. To raise awareness of bullying as an unacceptable form of behaviour with school management, teachers, students, parents/guardians,
3. To create a school ethos that acknowledges, accommodates and respects a diversity of students across the nine grounds covered by the equality legislation,
4. To ensure that the school's Social, Personal and Health Education raises awareness of the factors associated with bullying behaviour and develops appropriate knowledge, skills and behaviours,
5. To take practical actions to prevent incidents of bullying behaviour e.g. to ensure comprehensive supervision and monitoring measures through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation,
6. To develop procedures for reporting and recording incidents of bullying behaviour,
7. To develop procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour,
8. To develop a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and those involved in bullying behaviour,
9. To work with, and through, the various local agencies in countering all forms of bullying and anti-social behaviour.
10. To create a school ethos that acknowledges, accommodates and respects a diversity of people across the nine grounds.
11. To promote activities that foster a caring school community.

### **What members of the school community are covered by this policy?**

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.

## **Bullying**

These may be physical, verbal or psychological in nature, and may target any of the 9 areas of possible discrimination covered by the Equal Status Acts 2000/2008:

Gender, Marital Status, Family Status, Sexual Orientation, Religion, Age, Race, Membership of the Travelling Community, Disability.

Social networking sites will continue to be blocked within the school in accordance with the school's acceptable use of ICT policy

See **Appendix A** for different forms of bullying.

## **Identifying Actions to Prevent Bullying Behaviour / Publishing and Publicising an Anti-Bullying Policy**

- Excerpts from the Anti-Bullying Policy will be visible throughout the school in corridors and classrooms.
- It will be published on the school web-site, in the students' journal and in the school Code of Behaviour.
- The Anti-Bullying Policy will be promoted at various occasions e.g. parents' nights, first year enrolment and open nights

## **Noting and Recording Instances of Bullying**

St. Vincent's has an excellent pastoral care system in place, whereby each class is assigned a form teacher who is the student's first point of reference in the school. This form teacher takes the class from First-Year to Third Year. **It is generally the form teacher who deals with all matters relating to discipline and care. Reports of all bullying incidents (wherever they may have been reported) will be generally come to the form teacher first who passes on all complaints to the schools designated anti bullying co-ordinator, who is the person with overall responsibility for all allegations of bullying.** If the form teacher or anti bullying co-ordinator are named in the report as being responsible for the incident, or if there is a complaint regarding a staff member, then the incident will be reported directly to the Principal/Deputy Principal. (cf. Child Protection Guidelines).

Positive reinforcement of behaviour for the better good of the community is encouraged through the school award system.

• We have a Care Team in place which will have responsibility for ensuring the objectives of this policy are met. The team members represent the support system that exists for students within school:

1. Anti-bullying co-ordinator.

2. School Completion programme liaison.
3. Guidance teachers
4. Home school liaison teacher.
5. Deputy Principal/Principal

Formal curriculum provision:

- All year groups at Junior Cycle and TY are facilitated through the S.P.H.E. programme, which incorporates a module on bullying. Senior Cycle students are facilitated through RE
- Special Needs - As students with special needs can be more vulnerable, particularly in the initial transfer from primary to post-primary, we have put in place a mentoring system, organized between the SEN team and the Guidance Counsellor. During the month of September SEN students are assigned a mentor who assists them in the transition. This programme includes activities and coping strategies/life skills around bullying behaviours.
- Everyone is encouraged to participate in friendship week, which takes place on an annual basis. In line with health and safety regulations, students are supervised at all times, within classrooms and on school grounds, between the hours of 8.35 a.m. and 3:50 p.m. Students are also supervised while on any school related activity unless otherwise advised in writing beforehand.

### **Parental involvement**

Parental involvement in any school is vital and particularly so if a bullying incident has been reported. The HSCL teacher and school completion programme liaison both offer a class to parents on family skills and helping teenagers to cope with bullying.

### **Reporting bullying**

- An incident sheet (**Appendix B**) should be completed by the person receiving the report. These forms will be available from the office or the pigeon holes in the staff room.
- A copy of this report will be placed in the file of every student mentioned in it.
- A copy of the incident report will be given to the anti-bullying co-ordinator on its completion so as they are aware of the incident at the outset of its investigation.
- The anti-bullying co-ordinator will undertake a full investigation including talking to students, parents and staff and report back to the principal with findings.

### **Support Strategies**

Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour will be supported by the school counsellor to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others. Victims will also receive support. Other local persons and formal agencies such as general medical practitioners, gardaí, HSE, family agency and other community workers may be consulted as appropriate.

## **Sanctions**

Where bullying has been investigated and confirmed to be taking place the school may take the following action:

- Serious talk with students involved regarding current and future behaviour.
- Detention
- Signed written agreement regarding future behaviour with possibility of parents present.
- Offer of counselling.
- Contact support agencies (anger management)
- Suspension
- Referral to NEPS
- Consideration of the future of the student in the school by the Board Of Management.

## **APPENDIX (A) FORMS OF BULLYING**

### **General**

- Harassment,
- Humiliation ,
- Threatening language,
- Physical aggression,
- Damage to property,
- Name calling/ slagging/ ridicule of personal characteristics,
- Criticism of person's clothes or possessions,
- Graffiti,
- Extortion,
- Intimidation/ Victimisation,
- Gestures/ Expressions,
- Invasion of personal space,
- Prolonged nagging e.g. kicking the back of a chair etc.,
- Organised fights,
- Spreading rumours /telling lies, Isolation.

### **Cyber**

- Silent telephone/mobile phone calls,
- Abusive telephone/ mobile phone calls,
- Abusive text messages/ email,
- Taking/sending photographs by electronic device,
- Creating sites about a particular person,
- Abusive website comments/ blogs/ pictures,
- Video recording.

### **Homophobic**

- Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation,
- Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation,
- Name calling e.g. 'Gay',
- Exclusion based on a person's sexual orientation.

- Discrimination, prejudice.

### **Racial**

colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, employment, ethnic or traveller background, Imitating accents.

## APPENDIX (B) Incident form

### 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))\*

### 4. Location of incidents (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"/>

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)

**8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact**

**9. Details of actions taken**

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ (Relevant Teacher) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date submitted to anti- bullying coordinator \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX (C)

### Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation. The following checklist must be used for this purpose. The checklist is an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. In order to complete the checklist, an examination and review involving both quantitative and qualitative analysis, as appropriate across the various elements of the implementation of the school's anti-bullying policy will be required.

Yes /No

Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools</i> ?	
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	
Is the Board satisfied that school staff are sufficiently familiar with the policy and procedures to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy and procedures in their day to day work?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	
Has the Board discussed how well the school is handling all reports of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and not therefore included in the Principal's periodic report to the Board?	
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	

Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	
Has the data available from cases reported to the Principal (by the bullying recording template) been analysed to identify any issues, trends or patterns in bullying behaviour?	
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_