

St. Joseph's Secondary School Anti – Bullying Policy.



The following policy was developed through a collaborative approach involving the teaching staff, the Parents' Council, the Student Body and the Board of Management of St. Joseph's Secondary School.

Ratified by the Board of Management: Wednesday, September 14th 2005.

Reviewed: Code of Behaviour Sub-Committee, 2009/2010.

Reviewed: Anti-Bullying Committee with the Anti-Bullying Unit, T.C.D., February, 2013.

The scope of this policy is for student(s) bullying student(s).

**Ratified at the Board of Management meeting on the
20th May, 2013**

Mission Statement.

St. Joseph's Secondary School is a voluntary Catholic Secondary School, where each individual and group within the school community is encouraged and facilitated to contribute to the creation of a caring, supportive and inclusive educational environment, conducive to developing the diverse talents of all the participants, in accordance with the ERST Charter.

The aim of this policy is to:

- A. Address the issue of bullying in so far as it constitutes behaviour which is directly opposed to the achievements of the school Mission Statement.
- B. Ensure the right of each student to a safe, secure, learning and working environment.

St. Joseph's Secondary School reserves the right to apply its bullying policy in respect of bullying that occurs at a location, activity, function or programme that is not school related if in the opinion of the Principal and/or the Board of management the alleged bullying has created a hostile environment at the school for the victim, has infringed on the rights of the victim at the school and/or has materially disrupted the education process or the orderly operation of the school.

Definition.

Bullying may be defined by the experience of the victim.

Bullying is negative behaviour, which can be direct or indirect, verbal, non-verbal or physical, initiated or conducted by one or more persons against another or others in a systematic and on-going manner. Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour can also be described as bullying if they are unjustified and serve to intimidate on an on-going basis (O'Moore, 2000).

Prevention.

The school will endeavour to prevent bullying by encouraging an open, proactive relationship between staff and students and specifically by:

- Displaying the **Anti-Bullying Charter** prominently throughout the school. A copy of the Charter is at the end of this policy. A large poster/banner with the Anti-Bullying Charter printed on it will be signed by all students at the start of each school year and prominently displayed in the school building.
- Raising awareness in the **S.P.H.E.** and **C.S.P.E.** classes.
- Frequent contact with individual students by Tutors and Year Heads to establish good personal relationships.
- Surveying of all students anonymously in November and February each year, with regard to their sense of well-being in St. Joseph's Secondary School. This information will be used to identify the focus of anti-bullying measures if necessary. The questionnaire is listed in Appendix 9.
- Encouraging the role of the Student Council and Senior Prefects in promoting the general well-being of the students.
- Using a school produced video to highlight why it is wrong to engage in bullying and what to do if you are a victim of this behaviour.
- Encouraging positive relationships among all members of the school community. Give respect to get respect.
- Inviting the 'Sticks and Stones' theatre group to perform for the students during Friendship Week.
- Posting Appendix 4, 5, 6 and 7 to parents at the start of the school year. These appendices refer to Cyber Bullying.

Reporting.

- All incidents or suspicions of bullying must be brought to the attention of any of the following: Members of the Students Council, Senior Prefects, TY support students, Class Tutor, Guidance Counselling Team, Year Heads, Deputy Principal, Principal or any adult the person trusts, who will report the complaint to the Principal / Deputy Principal / Year Head, for investigation.
- A note about a Bullying Incident may be put in the drop box. The box is located outside the parent/teacher room.
- Incidents will be recorded in writing by the Year Head / Principal / Deputy Principal and by any individual involved in the bullying.
- All paperwork will be treated as confidential and stored in a secure place.

N.B. All reports must be entirely factual. Personal opinions or speculations must not be included.

Actions.

Dealing with complaints, Disclosures, Suspicions of Bullying.

STAGE 1. The No Blame Approach, a restorative approach.

- The year head or Deputy Principal or Principal will conduct an investigation, following a report or incident of bullying which will include interviewing the victim(s), witness (es) and alleged perpetrator(s).
- Convene a meeting with the students involved. Friend(s) of the victim may also attend.
- Explain the position to the alleged perpetrator(s) without allocating blame.
- A written undertaking will be sought from the parties involved that the unacceptable behaviour will end. The situation will be kept under observation and review.
- Contact parents of the students involved if necessary. Parents will also be contacted if written undertakings are not given.
- If the bullying involves cyber bullying, it is open to the victim(s) parents/guardians to report the matter to the Gardaí. The following legislation may be used by the Gardaí: Section 13 of the Post Office (Amendment) Act 1951 or Section 10 of the Non-Fatal Offences Against the person Act 1997. See Appendix 8.

STAGE 2. Repeated Bullying.

- The Principal or Deputy Principal will initiate pastoral strategies in the interests of the victims(s) and/or perpetrator(s), including contact with outside agencies if appropriate. Parents **will** be contacted and will be expected to arrange counselling for their son to help him with his repeated bullying. Documentary evidence will be required by the school management to confirm that the student has engaged in the counselling.

- If the bullying involves cyber bullying, it is open to the victim(s) parents/guardians to report the matter to the Gardaí. The following legislation may be used by the Gardaí: Section 13 of the Post Office (Amendment) Act 1951 or Section 10 of the Non-Fatal Offences Against the person Act 1997. See Appendix 8.
- Impose disciplinary sanctions as appropriate with reference to the Code of Behaviour.
- The situation will be kept under observation and review and support will be arranged for the victim.

STAGE 3.

Where a student continues to bully after engaging in the counselling in stage 2, his case will be referred to the Board of Management. **The Board may consider sanctions up to and including expulsion.**

Appendix 1

Examples of Bullying: - This list is not exhaustive.

- On-line Bullying, cyber bullying.
- Physical aggression – pushing, shoving, punching, tripping etc.
- Damage to or theft of, a student's property.
- Extortion – demands for money etc.
- “Slagging”. This usually refers to banter. However, when it descends to very personal, frequently repeated, remarks about appearance, clothing, personal hygiene or members of one's family, it is regarded as Bullying.
- Sarcasm, humiliation, verbal abuse, intimidating behaviour, degrading physical contact.
- Phone calls or text messaging. Parents are asked to be particularly vigilant in this area.
- Misuse of camera phones. Parents' attention is drawn to the school policy on mobile phones and camera phones. The sanctions for using technology that records include up to and include expulsion.
- Mockery, e.g. of work in class, physical traits, accent, social or racial origins.
- Writing insulting remarks/graffiti about another person.
- Passing around notes about another person.
- Passing around drawings of another person.
- Whispering insults about another person loud enough to be heard.
- Spreading rumours.
- Name calling which hurts, insults or humiliates.
- Excluding another person from games or group activities.
- Surrounding and pointing mockingly at an individual.
- Homophobic and Transphobic bullying.

- The 9 grounds of discrimination: Gender, Marital status, Family status, Age, Disability, Race, Sexual orientation, Religious belief and Membership of the Traveller community.
- Pushing, Shoving 'Mess fighting'.
- Excluding someone from the social or class group.
- Threats, demands, invitations or coercion to fight.
- Using any type of equipment to cause fear in another person.

Appendix 2.

Some Effects of Bullying.

- Insecurity.
- Anxiety about going to school.
- Loss of confidence and self-esteem.
- Lowering of self-esteem.
- Changes of mood and behaviour.
- Self-harming.
- Attempting suicide/suicide.
- Stress.
- Reduced ability to concentrate.
- Lack of motivation and energy.
- Poor or deteriorating school work.
- Depression.
- Aggressive eruptions/tantrums.
- Withdrawn, unhappy demeanour.
- Panic attacks.
- Sleeping problems, bedwetting, nightmares.

Appendix 3.

Signs and Symptoms of Bullying.

(Parents and Teachers are asked to be particularly observant in this regard)

- Reluctance to go to school.
- Truancy.
- Deterioration in educational performance.
- Pattern of physical illness – headaches, stomach aches.
- Loss of interest, lack of concentration.
- Changes in mood and behaviour, especially before returning to school after holidays.
- Signs of anxiety/distress – stammering, nightmares, loss of appetite, poor sleep patterns.
- Property missing or damaged.
- Increased demands for money or stealing.
- Unexplained bruising, cuts, damage to clothing.
- Reluctance to say what is wrong.

Appendix 4.

What is Cyber- Bullying?

Cyber-Bullying occurs when a person or group makes use of electronic communication devices, commonly mobile phones or the internet, to deliberately harass, intimidate or humiliate another individual.

Cyber-Bullying can consist of threats, insults, embarrassing or humiliating messages, pictures or video clips, defamation or impersonation. Insults can be prejudice-based, expressing racist, sexist or homophobic sentiments.

In Ireland research indicates that almost one in five students are involved in cyber-bullying either as victims, bullies or both.

Over 75% of incidents originate from the use of mobile phones, with text-messaging being the most common form of cyber-bullying both in and out of school.

THE EFFECTS OF CYBER-BULLYING.

Some of the effects of cyber-bullying include:

- Stress
- Anxiety
- Anger
- Sleep problems
- Becoming withdrawn
- Anger
- Depression
- Thoughts of suicide
- Aggressive behaviour
- Loss of confidence & self-esteem
- Loss of a sense of security
- Lack of motivation & energy
- Alcohol, drug or substance abuse

Appendix 5.

Signs of Cyber-Bullying.

Some of the signs that a child is being cyber-bullied include:

- Signs of emotional distress during or after using the internet.
- Unexpectedly stops using the computer.
- Withdrawal from friends and activities.
- Avoidance of school or group gatherings.
- Slipping grades and acting out in anger at home.
- Changes in mood or behaviour.
- Changes in sleep or appetite.
- Lower confidence and self-esteem.
- Visible signs of anxiety but refusal to say what is wrong.
- Becoming isolated.

Appendix 6.

TEN TOP TIPS TO DEAL WITH CYBER-BULLYING.

By Prof. Mona O'Moore, TCD, in Association with Carphone Warehouse

- 1. Inform yourself about mobile phone and internet use and safety.** Carefully read your child's mobile phone manual and take note of how to contact the phone's service provider should it be necessary to make a complaint.
- 2. Make sure your child or teen understands the importance of internet and mobile safety.** Do not take it for granted that your child or teen knows how to avoid the pitfalls of electronic communication. Warn them of the pitfalls of putting photos of themselves on the internet or to indiscriminately share their name, address, phone number or other personal information online. Ask them are they happy to put the same information in a shop window as they pass around amongst their friends.
- 3. Inform yourself about blocking devices which will help to block unwanted and abusive calls.** The vMad Bully Stop application allows your child and teenager to control who calls or sends them texts. It also enables you and your child to view the content of any blocked text.
- 4. Encourage open and non-judgemental communication with your child or teenager.** Talk to your child about their online friends and activities in the same way you would their traditional friendships and activities. Ask if they have seen abusive or hurtful texts or postings. Ask them what they would do if they did. If there is anything you do not understand about their mobile phone or internet activities ask them to show you.
- 5. Key advice for your child or teenager if targeted.**
 - Do not feel ashamed. The shame lies with the bully.
 - Do not reply to abusive or hurtful messages.
 - Save the message.
 - Report the threatening or offensive behaviour to a parent or teacher and/or contact the service provider (through its Customer Care or Report Abuse Facility). If the cyber-bullying is very threatening and serious contact your local Gardaí.
 - Block the sender.
- 6. Share evidence of cyber-bullying with the school.** Most often the children who cyber-bully also engage in traditional face-to-face bullying so it's important the school gets to know about it so that they can apprehend the bullies. With cyber bullying you will have the advantage of being able to show copies of the offensive messages, pictures or video clips used to humiliate or embarrass your child or teen.

- 7. Make sure your child or teenager understands that you disapprove of cyber-bullying.** It is important that children and teens learn to respect each other and therefore they should be told to avoid engaging in cyber-bullying for whatever reason that might tempt them to be abusive and hurtful to others. Should you as a parent be informed of their inappropriate behaviour, impress upon them that one should not do onto others what one would not like done to oneself. It is vital also that you try to find the reason for their cyber-bullying behaviour. In that way you can help them overcome it.
- 8. Administer consequences for breaking the rules of cyber-safety.** If necessary apply the ‘yellow card, red card’ philosophy and as a corrective measure reduce their allowance for mobile phone credit or the time spent on the computer.
- 9. Have your child or teen understand that cyber-bullying can lead to a criminal offence.** Any text message or internet communication that is grossly threatening, offensive or harasses another person could be investigated by the Gardaí and result in prosecution.
- 10. Keep up to-date with the advances in electronic communication.** Do not be afraid to show your ignorance. Remember we are all ignorant about certain things. Listen and learn from your child about the positive uses of electronic communication as well as the most effective strategies to prevent and tackle bullying and cyber-bullying.

Appendix 7.

ADVICE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE ON HOW TO HANDLE CYBER-BULLYING AND BE CYBER-SAFE.

If you are being cyber-bullied, it is important to remember the following:

- Do not ignore the bullying, tell someone you trust.
- Remember it's not about you. Often people who bully others do so to make themselves feel better because they are unhappy. Do not blame yourself; it is not your fault.
- Do not delete the offensive text, email, phone-call, video-clip or image; this should instead be kept as evidence.
- Do not respond to unwanted texts, instead turn off your phone for a few days or change your number.
- If you are receiving unwanted calls, do not hang up straight away as this may feed the callers wish to scare you, instead walk away and hang up a few minutes later.
- Think about purchasing an application which would allow you to control who calls or sends you texts, such as vMad Bully Stop from Carphone Warehouse.

Some tips on staying Cyber-safe:

Facebook.

- Do not accept 'friend invites' from people you do not know; exercise the same caution you would with a stranger you meet on the street.
- Make sure your privacy settings are so that only your friends can view your personal information and photos. If your profile is set to 'public' anybody can view your photos and anything you or your friends write online.
- Be sensible about what personal information you include in your profile. Keep it general and exercise great caution in listing details of your home address, mobile number, email address, the school or sports club you attend.

- Do not assume just because your profile is 'private' that your conversations are too. If someone hacks into your friend's profile, then they will also be able to view all your information.
- Make it a rule of thumb not to divulge anything online that you would not be happy to say out loud in a crowded room.

General cyber-safety.

- Do not respond to 'flames' (unwanted emails) or open files from people you don't know.
- If you are using instant messaging, chat rooms or other social networking sites, remember to never give out personal information or photos; instead use a nickname.
- Be cyber-savvy and bear in mind that the person you are communicating with may not be who they say they are.

Appendix 8.

Legislation relating to Cyber-Bullying

There is not, as yet, any laws relating directly to cyber-bullying. However, the following pieces of legislation can be applicable in many cases:

- The making of nuisance and malicious calls or sending by telephone any message that is grossly offensive, or is indecent, obscene or menacing is a criminal offense under Section 13 (1) of the **Post Office (Amendment) Act 1951**. This Act specifically includes text messages but it does not include references to email or internet messages.
- Under the **Criminal Damage Act 1991** it is an offense to damage property (Section 2), make threats to damage property (Section 3), and to gain unauthorised access to data (Section 5).
- Bullying is a form of harassment and as such falls within the provisions of the **Non-Fatal Offences Against the Person Act 1997**. Section 10 deals with harassment: when a person's acts by any means intentionally or recklessly, interferes with another's peace and privacy or causes alarm, distress or harm to the other.

Appendix 9.

Student questionnaire

Date: _____

What year are you in? _____

<p>Q 1. How often have you been bullied at school this term?</p>	<p>I haven't been bullied at school this term..... <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>It has only happened once or twice..... <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>2 or 3 times a month..... <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>About once a week..... <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Several times a week..... <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>If you haven't been bullied/cyber bullied do not answer the rest of the questions.</p>	
<p>Q 2. If you have been bullied in what way have you been bullied at school this term? (You may tick more than one box).</p>	<p>Called nasty names about your race..... <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Called nasty names..... <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Physically hurt..... <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Threatened..... <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No one would talk to me..... <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Rumours spread about me..... <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Belongings taken from me..... <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Bullied another way..... <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Q 3. How often have you been cyber-bullied this term?</p>	<p>I haven't been cyber bullied at school this term.. <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>It has only happened once or twice..... <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>2 or 3 times a month..... <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>About once a week..... <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Several times a week..... <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Q 4. In what way have you been cyber-bullied this term?</p>	<p>Been sent abusive text messages..... <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Received abusive calls from mobile phones..... <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Had an embarrassing picture or video clip taken of you & sent to others via mobile phone..... <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Had nasty, aggressive or embarrassing things posted about you on the internet <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Received a nasty, aggressive or threatening email..... <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Q 5. If you were bullied this term where did you get bullied? (You may circle more than one option).</p>	<p>In the corridors..... <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>In the school grounds during break..... <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>In the classroom..... <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>In the bathroom/toilets..... <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>In the gym dressing room..... <input type="checkbox"/></p>

	In the GPA.....? On the way to and from school.....? Somewhere else in school.....?
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ST. JOSEPH'S ANTI-BULLYING

CHARTER.

WE ALL SHARE RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE THAT BULLYING IS NOT TOLERATED.

ALL SCHOOL STAFF, THE STUDENT COUNCIL, THE PARENT COUNCIL AND THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT ARE UNITED IN THEIR OPPOSITION TO ALL FORMS OF BULLYING.

CYBER, VERBAL, PSYCHOLOGICAL OR PHYSICAL BULLYING WILL NOT BE TOLERATED.

IT IS UNACCEPTABLE TO BULLY IN ST. JOSEPH'S
SECONDARY SCHOOL.

IF YOU ARE BEING BULLIED TELL A PARENT OR A TEACHER.