

# St Angela's College School Development Planning Initiative

## St. Angela's College Anti-bullying Policy

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 Angela's College 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.
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); and
  - On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.
3. In accordance with the ***Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*** bullying is defined as follows:

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,

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- Cyber-bullying and
- Identity-based bullying such as homophobic, transphobic, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

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.

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the ***Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools***.

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows: (***see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools***):

#### **The Anti-Bullying Team:**

Ms Margaret Costello

Ms Shelly Whelan

Mr Aidan Murray

Ms Muireann Curtin

Ms Audrey Kelly

Ms Hannah Ní Fhaolain

Ms Amy Barry-Murphy

Mr Joe Sheehy

Ms Louise Bermingham

Ms Emily Lewis

The Guidance Counsellor: Ms Niav Gallagher

The Deputy Principal: Ms Edel O'Donovan

The Principal: Mr Pat Curran

**Note:** *All members of the school community have a role in investigating and dealing with Bullying, these also include subject teachers, class teachers and learning monitors.*

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 (see Section 6.5 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):

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In St. Angela's we are pro-active in making students, parents and teachers aware of the causes and harmful consequences of bullying on the student and school community. We do this in the following ways;

- ✚ We regularly remind staff and students of the imports of living up to ideals expressed in our school's Mission Statement.
- ✚ Our induction programmes place special importance on friendship and the importance of being caring and supportive of one another.
- ✚ The school has a policy of praising positive behaviours and teachers take the opportunity to write positive comments about students in their journal.
- ✚ Students are encouraged to participate in school sports and extra-curricular activities which enable them to work as part of a team and develop positive relationships with their fellow students.
- ✚ Classes such as SPHE and CSPE are used to examine the issue of bullying and the various forms it can take. Other subjects may be used to explore the topic from different angles.
- ✚ Posters, competitions, drama workshops, friendship weeks and other events are used to point out the negative effects of bullying on those who are targeted by it and those who witness it.
- ✚ Class and subject teachers as well as those on supervision duties during break and lunchtimes watch out for any form of behaviour which might leave a student open tot bullying or for signs of distress which might indicate that bullying is going on.
- ✚ Student Council members, members of the Meitheal team and class prefects/vice-prefects are encouraged to watch out for any problems and to report any concerns around bullying to the relevant class teacher, member of the anti-bullying team or guidance counsellor.
- ✚ Students are encouraged to recognise, reject and report bullying behaviour to the anti-bullying team or another trusted teacher
- ✚ The school journal highlights the importance of reporting bullying whenever it occurs as do anti-bullying/respect for all signs placed all-round the school.
- ✚ The Parents' Council raises awareness of bullying issues through a regular programme of talks from experts in the field.
- ✚ All aspects of bullying prevention are dealt with regularly as part of continuing professional development for staff

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 (***see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools***):

An Anti-bullying Team made up of staff members (and chosen senior students?) exists to cultivate an environment free of bullying in the school and to handle any incidents of a bullying nature if and when they arise.

When bullying occurs students or anybody who becomes aware of it should report it at the earliest opportunity. However we know that many students view the reporting of bullying as ratting or squealing. We feel strongly that this culture needs to change. In surveys carried out in St. Angela's students indicated that they would fear reprisals from bullies if they were seen to be punished by the school authorities for their bullying behaviour.

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A student reporting bullying does so in order that the bullying stops and not with the intention of getting anybody in trouble. We want to make it "safe" for students to come to a staff member to report bullying behaviour without fearing further negative consequences from the bully. To achieve this we undertake not to punish a student for a first bullying offence reported to us, but only provided that the student signs a solemn promise to stop the bullying behaviour immediately and give a solemn undertaking that they will be no negative repercussions for the targeted student.

All reports of bullying will be taken seriously and thoroughly investigated. Records will be kept and any recurrence of the reported bullying behaviour will be handled in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.

When bullying is reported the intention is to end the suffering and distress it is causing. To achieve this students and their parents must be truthful in their reporting of bullying and must co-operate fully with the school's efforts to tackle the problem. This includes allowing the school to mention the name of the student who is being bullied to the alleged bullying student and her parents.

## **ACTION TO BE TAKEN BY THE SCHOOL WHEN AN INCIDENT OF BULLYING IS REPORTED OR SUSPECTED?**

Any student/parent reporting bullying will be assured that the report will be treated seriously and that they have done the right thing in making the report.

When bullying behaviour is suspected or alleged, preliminary enquiries by the anti-bullying team will establish the facts. A bullying incident report form will be filled out. ANY student may be asked to write a written account of what happened as part of an investigation. This will be standard procedure and does not necessarily imply that a student is guilty of misbehaviour.

### ***Stage 1***

If the anti-bullying team is satisfied that bullying has occurred, the bullying student will be asked to meet with members of the anti-bullying team. It will be made clear to them how their behaviour is hurting or distressing the targeted student(s) and that it is unacceptable. Provided that this is the first incidence of bullying behaviour in which they have been involved, it will be assumed that it was a one-off mistake which can and must be remedied. If the student agrees to sign and honour a solemn promise to stop the bullying behaviour and to treat all students fairly, equally and respectfully, thus guaranteeing no negative repercussions for the targeted student, no further disciplinary action will be taken. The student will be asked to write a brief account of the impact of their behaviour on the targeted student. The matter will NOT be reported to the Deputy Principal or Principal. Therefore in reporting bullying incidents students are getting nobody "*in trouble*" but rather preventing them from getting into further trouble if the situation is allowed to drag on.

The bullying student may be asked to make an appointment with the Guidance Counsellor to talk through their behaviour. The targeted student will be offered support from the guidance counsellor/class teacher, as appropriate.

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A record will be kept of any strategies or interventions or any other relevant information. All documentation pertaining to bullying incidents will be retained securely in the school.



There will be on-going monitoring by staff to ensure that there is no further fall-out or a repetition of the behaviour.

## **Stage 2**

If a student has signed a promise to treat all students with respect and yet repeats the bullying behaviour, parents will be informed and requested to countersign their daughter's promise. The student will be required to do school community service and /or not allowed participate in class/year/ school activities and events

## **Stage 3**

Breach of this additional promise will be regarded as a very grave infringement and will incur sanctions in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour to include:

-  Suspension for a specific period of time
-  Expulsion in very serious cases

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows (*see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

The Guidance Counsellor will –

- ✓ Be available, if the student wishes, for one-to-one meetings to listen to the student in a supportive way
- ✓ Communicate effectively and consult with relevant members of staff and parents throughout the Counselling Process

Through these one-to-one meetings, the Guidance Counsellor's focus will be on -

- ✓ Giving the student space to talk about the situation and feelings around it; Assuring the student that the problem lies with the bully, and help to remove possible feelings of guilt;
- ✓ Promoting high self-esteem within the student through reassurance and encouraging her to get involved in as many activities both inside and outside school;
- ✓ Working to help the student be more assertive and build up her confidence;
- ✓ Working to reassure the student about her appearance and abilities;
- ✓ Working to help the student acknowledge what existing supports and positives that are in her life. i.e. family, friends, teachers etc.;
- ✓ Working to help the student have the confidence again to reach out to others and build healthy friendships;

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In some situations, where the Guidance Counsellor has been working with the bullying student and the targeted student, it may be possible to bring the two parties together. This will only happen if the targeted student wants and agrees to this move.

Sometimes there may be no improvement in the behaviour of the bullying student, despite the Guidance Counsellor's best efforts. In this situation, the issue will be referred back to Principal and Deputy Principal.

The school will also try to help the bullying student:

- ✓ They will be helped to understand the reasons for their bullying behaviour and the impact of their behaviour on others
- ✓ They will be made aware that there are other, better ways of dealing with their anger, frustration, insecurity, jealousy etc.
- ✓ They will be encouraged to see their own positive traits and strengths and it will be made clear to them that it is their behaviour which is not acceptable, not themselves.
- ✓ They will be encouraged to seek affirmation and popularity through more positive channels e.g. sporting achievements, school leadership

## **8. 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.

## **9. 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.

10. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on **7/04/2014**

11. 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.

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12. 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: 7/04/2014

Date of next review: April 2015

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## **Appendix 2 Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate**

The following are some practical tips for immediate actions that can be taken to help build a positive school culture and climate and to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour.

- Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.
- Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.
- Catch them being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN.
- Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.
- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.
- Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use. Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.
- Actively involve parents and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media.
- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.
- Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.
- All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- Ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.
- School staff can get pupils to help them to identify bullying “hot spots” and “hot times” for bullying in the school.
  - ✓ Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas, changing rooms, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision.
  - ✓ Hot times again tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when pupils are in the playground/school yard or moving classrooms.
- Support the establishment and work of student councils.



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## **Appendix 3 Template for recording bullying behaviour**

### **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))\***

Pupil concerned	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Pupil	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

### **4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))\***

School grounds	<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)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

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### **9. Details of actions taken**

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

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal \_\_\_\_\_

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## Appendix 4 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 \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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## **Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the anti-bullying policy**

To: \_\_\_\_\_

The Board of Management of \_\_\_\_\_ wishes to inform you that:

- ✓ The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of \_\_\_\_ [date].
  
- ✓ This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in [Appendix 4](#) of the Department's, *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Principal

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**Anti-Bullying**

