

# **ANTI- BULLYING POLICY**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This Anti-Bullying Policy has been created by the Board of Governors of the school following consultation with pupils, parents and staff. Through it the school seeks to create a safe and caring environment for all pupils and staff. The school recognises that every pupil has the right to be educated in an atmosphere which is free from fear and intimidation and that bullying in any form will not be tolerated.

## **DEFINITION OF BULLYING**

*Bullying is repeated behaviour which makes other people feel uncomfortable or threatened whether this is intended or not.*

Bullying can occur through several types of anti-social behaviour, including:

PHYSICAL - e.g. hitting, kicking, spitting at, taking or hiding others' belongings, including money, damaging others' belongings.

VERBAL - e.g. name calling, teasing, insulting, threatening, writing unkind notes.

CYBER – email, instant messaging, chat rooms, mobile phone texts and sending picture/video clips via mobile phone cameras.

EMOTIONAL- e.g. being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, intimidating spreading rumours (verbal and written).

RACIST – using racial taunts, graffiti, gestures.

### ***Aims of the Anti-Bullying Policy at St Patrick's Grammar School:***

1. To clarify for students, parents and staff that bullying is always unacceptable and will be treated as a serious offence, and that the school will

not tolerate instances where any student attempts to threaten, coerce or victimise another, in individual or group situations.

2. To confirm that every student has the right to be safe and happy in school, on the way to and from school, and to be protected if and when he feels vulnerable.

3. To encourage students through the pastoral system at St Patrick's, to confide in Form Teachers, Year Heads or any teacher whom they trust, on occasions when they have felt themselves to be victims of bullying or have witnessed others being bullied.

4. To encourage, through the pastoral curriculum, the development of an atmosphere which will not be conducive to bullying.

***Procedures for Dealing with Bullying:***

1. It is the responsibility of individual teachers, Form Teachers, Year Heads, or Counsellor **to listen** to students attentively and respond to what they say. From the outset, the Year 8 Induction programme should establish what the school means by, and what it will do about, bullying.

2. Action subsequent to listening will take a number of forms:

a) encouragement and support of students in coping with a perceived threat.

b) approach to named student or students who may be acting in an anti-social or intimidating way, to discuss reasons for this and implications of it for the perceived or chosen victim. Every effort is made to resolve the problem through counselling of both parties

(c) discussion, in Form class or in private, of words, intentions and actions of bullies and victims in an attempt to encourage understanding and honesty in response to bullying.

(d) involvement of parents, where appropriate in discussions with bullies or victims.

(e) disciplining of bully. If bullying behaviour continues this may include suspension from school with return dependent upon adherence to a contract of acceptable behaviour.

3. When students confide fears about bullying to parents, the school encourages parents to bring that information to the attention of their sons Year Head immediately.
4. All discussions with students or parents should be documented and filed by school.

***Implementation :***

1. Communication among staff must be sufficiently clear so that all members accept responsibility for the implementation of this policy.
2. Normal lines of referral, as set down in the staff handbook, should be followed.
3. The ethos of the school is the primary means of conveying the message that bullying is so unacceptable that it will be dealt with quickly, firmly and fairly as soon as it is made known.
4. The curriculum both pastoral and academic should reinforce values and attitudes which are not conducive to bullying. Learning for Life and Work and Personal Development Programmes will address bullying issues and prevention. Additionally, the annual anti bullying week will be used to raise awareness.
5. All students shall be asked to read and sign a student's charter.
6. The ancillary staff, laboratory technicians and office staff will be involved in the implementation of the school's bullying policy.
7. The school shall be organised to minimise opportunities for bullying, e.g. the provision of increased supervision at particular times.
8. Communication of guidelines to students and parents on how to deal with bullying. The Board of Governors will review this Anti-Bullying Policy on a regular basis and monitor its implementation.

## **Links to Other School Policies**

This policy is linked to the school's Pastoral Care, Child Protection, Acceptable Use and Health & Safety Policies which seek to create a safe and caring environment in which effective learning and teaching can take place and all pupils are given the opportunity to develop to their full potential.

## **GUILDLINES IF BULLYING OCCURS**

### **FOR STUDENTS WHO ARE BEING BULLIED**

- (a) Tell yourself that you do not deserve to be bullied, and that it is **wrong**.
- (b) Be proud of **who** you are. It is good to be individual.
- (c) Try not to show that you are upset. It is hard but a bully thrives on someone's fear.
- (d) Stay with a group of friends/people. There is safety in numbers.
- (e) Be assertive but don't fight back. Fighting can make things worse.
- (f) Go straight to a teacher or member of staff. Generally it is best to tell an adult you trust straight away. You will get immediate support.

**Teachers will take you seriously and can deal with bullies in a way which should end the bullying and will not make things worse for you. Remember that your silence is the bully's greatest weapon.**

### **FOR STUDENTS WHO KNOW SOMEONE IS BEING BULLIED**

- a) Take action! Watching and doing nothing looks as if you are on the side of the bully. It makes the victim feel more unhappy and on their own.
- b) If you feel you cannot get involved, **tell** an adult **immediately**. Teachers have ways of dealing with the bully without getting you into trouble.
- c) Do not associate with a bully.

### **FOR PARENTS**

- a) Look for unusual behaviour in your children. For example, they may suddenly not wish to attend school, feel ill regularly, or not complete work to their normal standard.
- b) Always take an active role in your child's education. Enquire how their day has gone, who they have spent their time with, how lunch time was spent, etc.

- c) If you feel your child may be a victim of bullying behaviour, inform the School **immediately**. Your complaint will be taken seriously and appropriate action will follow.
- d) It is important that you advise your child not to fight back. It can make matters worse.
- e) Tell your own son there is nothing wrong with him. It is not his fault that he is being bullied.
- f) Make sure your child is fully aware of the Anti-Bullying policy at St Patrick's, and that he will not be afraid to ask for help.

### **ACTION TO BE TAKEN BY SCHOOL WHEN BULLYING IS SUSPECTED**

If bullying is suspected the school will talk to the suspected victim, the suspected bully and any witnesses. If any degree of bullying is identified, the following action will be taken:-

The school supports the **victims** in the following ways:

- by offering them an immediate opportunity to talk about the experience with their class teacher, or another teacher if they choose.
- by informing the victims' parents/guardians.
- by offering continuing support when they feel they need it, including referral to school counselling service.
- by taking disciplinary steps to prevent more bullying.

We also discipline, yet try to help the **bullies** in the following ways:

- by talking about what happened, to discover why they became involved.
- informing the bullies' parents/guardians.
- by continuing to work with the bullies in order to get rid of anti-social attitudes as far as possible, including referral to the school counselling service.
- by taking disciplinary steps to prevent more bullying.

# St Patrick's Grammar School Armagh Students' Anti – Bullying Charter

## Responsibilities

I will treat other people with respect.

I will treat other people's property with respect.

I will not engage in physical bullying of any kind – eg hitting, kicking, spitting.

I will not engage in name-calling or insulting other people.

I will not write things about other people that could be in any way threatening or unkind. (This includes notes, emails, text messages or messages written on social networking sites like *Facebook* or *Bebo*).

I recognize that being unfriendly to other people, excluding them, tormenting or intimidating them or spreading rumours about them are all forms of bullying and are, therefore, not acceptable in St Patrick's Grammar School.

I will not associate with people who engage in inappropriate behaviour, or protect them.

I will act responsibly and tell an adult if I know that another student is being bullied.

## Rights

I recognize that everyone in St Patrick's Grammar School has the right to feel proud of his achievements and the right to his individuality and self-esteem.

I recognize that each person has the right to feel safe and happy in school and on the way to and from school.

I understand that I have the right to be protected when I feel vulnerable or unsafe.

I understand that I have the right to let an adult in St Patrick's know when I feel vulnerable or intimidated and that the adult will listen to my concerns and deal with them discreetly.

## Consequences

I accept the school's definition of Bullying as laid out in its Anti-Bullying Policy:

***“Bullying is repeated behaviour which makes other people feel uncomfortable or threatened whether this is intended or not”***

I understand that if my behaviour is not in keeping with these agreed principles, it may cause me to face disciplinary sanctions.

Agreement drawn up on \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Student)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Form Teacher)