



St Patrick's CBC

Bullying Policy

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INTRODUCTION

At St Patrick's CBC we believe that every person, despite our differences, should be able to develop to their full potential in an environment which is safe, secure and non-threatening. To this end, we will all work towards a community where:

- All should experience that they are valued and accepted.
- All feel that they belong and are part of the community.
- All work together in a spirit of co-operation.
- All are treated with respect and courtesy at all times despite differences in viewpoints, religion or culture.

To achieve this goal, bullying or discrimination of any form, cannot be tolerated and is dealt with through the steps below.

DESCRIPTION OF BULLYING

Bullying can be defined as intentional, repeated, systematic hurtful acts, words or other behaviour by an individual or individuals against another individual or individuals with the conscious desire to hurt, threaten or frighten the individual. **Bullying can also be a single interaction by an individual or a group.**

Bullying can be committed by an individual or a group. Bullying incidents take place between pupils, when a teacher bullies a pupil or a pupil bullies a teacher, when groups of pupils bully a teacher, it can be teacher on teacher and between parents and teachers.

Bullying is not the normal joking around and playing between individuals. The difference exists in the relationship between the bully and the victim and the intent of the interaction.

Bullying usually, although not always, occurs between individuals who are not friends. In the bullying situation there is a power difference between the bully and the victim. The intention of the act of bullying is to put the victim in distress in some way.

Bullying can take various forms:

- Physical bullying which includes, but is not limited to, punching, hitting, poking in the face or on the body, strangling, hair-pulling, beating, biting, tripping-up, pinching, silly pranks and vandalism of personal property.
- Verbal bullying which includes name-calling, persistent teasing or picking on, insults, gossiping, spreading malicious rumours, abusive comments, swearing at someone, writing nasty letters about someone, verbal threats and insulting family members, genders, religion and race.
- Relational bullying occurs when a person is excluded from activities.
- Psychological/emotional bullying includes terrorising, extorting, defaming, humiliating, blackmailing, inappropriate gestures, malicious messages using technology (cell phones and social networking internet sites), inappropriate use of camera phones, rating/ ranking of personal characteristics such as race, disability or ethnicity, manipulating friendships and ostracising.
- Sexual bullying includes many of the above as well as exhibitionism, sexual positioning, comments about sexual orientation, sexual harassment and abuse involving actual physical contact and sexual assault.
- Other examples of discriminatory behaviour/actions:
 - Refusal to work together.
 - Graffiti which is offensive.
 - Dismissal or making fun of another's point of view.
 - Unwillingness to listen to another's point of view.
 - Imitation of accents and mannerisms.
 - Negative comments or body language about ability.

Anybody who knows that bullying is happening is expected to share this information so that positive action can be taken. Not reporting an incident of bullying protects the bullies and sends the message that they can continue their bullying.

Bullying is seen as a serious offence and will be dealt with accordingly.

PROCEDURE

Bullying is a Level 3 infringement according to the Code of Conduct of the High School and Primary School. As such, formal disciplinary measures will take place following an incident of bullying. This can include any one or all of the following:

- Parent interview.
- Referral of the bully for psychological counselling at the parents' cost.
- Suspension from St Patrick's CBC.
- Disciplinary Hearing.
- Expulsion.

The following procedure will apply where infringements require formal discipline measures, i.e. **Level 3** infringements:

- In order to gather information and decide upon the specific disciplinary steps to be taken, the alleged misconduct will be investigated by the Deputy Head or Head of the Primary or High School upon receiving notice of such alleged misconduct. This informal investigation, which will last no longer than three school days, may include an opportunity, if appropriate, for the pupil to 'state his/her case' in response to the complaint. At this stage, before the validity and details of the alleged misconduct have been established, the School will not necessarily advise the parents/guardians of such an investigation. If there has been misconduct which requires further steps to be taken, the parents will be informed. It is imperative that there be accurate documentation.
- Depending upon the seriousness of the alleged misconduct the Executive Head may decide to **suspend** the pupil pending a full investigation. An Internal Disciplinary Hearing or a Disciplinary Hearing of the sub-committee of the Board of Governors will follow such a suspension unless, following the investigation, the infringement is proven not to be of the nature as initially alleged.
- In the case of suspension:
 - The parents will be phoned for a meeting at which the situation will be explained to them and the pupil.
 - Parents will be advised to remove their son/daughter from the School premises immediately. The pupil may only return upon being informed.
 - Such a suspension may not last longer than five school days unless the misconduct proves to be of such a serious nature that there will be a Disciplinary Hearing of the sub-committee of the Board of Governors and the possibility of expulsion.
- Should, following the investigation, the infringement be confirmed but not regarded to be of such a nature that the suspension continues or the pupil face a Disciplinary Hearing, then
 - A meeting will be convened with the pupil, parents/ guardians, Deputy Head and Head of the Primary or High School where the corrective measures will be explained.
 - The pupil may return to School.
 - Disciplinary measures to be taken, following the infringement of the Code, will be communicated.

To create the secure and non-threatening environment needed for positive learning experiences, consistent and dedicated application of the procedure on how to deal with bullying has to be followed by all stakeholders.

- Whether a pupil is a victim or has witnessed a bullying incident, the incident should be reported to any teacher that they feel comfortable with or a member of the Pupil Support Team. If it is teacher on pupil bullying, the witness or victim should report it to the Head of the High School/Primary School or else to the Executive Head of St Patrick's CBC.
- The pupil will be interviewed in as much detail as possible whilst noting all the detail on the **Pupil Interview Form**. At the end of the interview the pupil will be asked to read the notes made on the **Pupil Interview Form**, and to verify such as true and accurate. The pupil will, as far as is practical and possible, be asked for a written statement.
- Should the teacher who has been given the information not be the Head of the Primary or High School, a written report is to be given to the Head of the Primary or High School together with all supporting documentation. The reporting teacher is to ensure that copies of all documentation have been placed in the file of the relevant pupil/s.
- The Head of the Primary or High School will then do a thorough investigation of the reported incident and document it in as much detail as possible.
 - Depending on the seriousness of the incident, the parents of both the victim and the bully will be notified. In the case of teacher on pupil bullying, the teacher will be informed.
 - Where possible and appropriate witnesses will be interviewed to substantiate the allegations.

- Appropriate steps will be taken after careful consideration of information provided by both the victim and the bully. These can include counselling of both parties, empowerment of the victim, laying down clear guidelines of expected behaviour in the future, appropriate punishment of the bully, follow-up of the victim as well as the bully, compensation or repair of any possessions of the victim by the bully. In more severe cases there may be suspension (High School/Primary School Code of Conduct) following the incident and this may even result in expulsion in certain instances. (Refer to High School/Primary School Code of Conduct on procedures with regards to expulsion).
- Should a parent report an incident of bullying the same procedure as outlined above will be followed and the parent will be given an indication of when feedback can be expected.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF TEACHERS, PARENTS AND PUPILS

All members of the St Patrick's CBC Community, i.e. staff, parents and pupils, have a responsibility to contribute to a safe, non-threatening and caring environment by:

- Treating everybody with respect and kindness.
- Acting with thought and consideration to others.
- Behaving courteously, politely and helpfully at all times to all persons.
- Being friendly and co-operative.
- Being honest and truthful.

To this end all members of the St Patrick's CBC community will therefore refrain from:

- Making disrespectful, offensive and unkind remarks.
- Degrading, negative comments being made on a one-to-one basis or openly.
- Behaving in a racist, sexist or homophobic manner.
- Using foul or unacceptable language.
- Being rude or aggressive.
- Using physical aggression.
- Damaging property which is not theirs.

Parents must:

- Report alleged incidents of bullying as soon as possible so that there can be an investigation and the extent of the problem can be determined by the school. (What one child can experience as bullying another may experience as acceptable social interaction).
- Encourage their child to talk openly about their problems and worries.
- Discuss various coping strategies with your child to provide him/ her with the necessary tools to deal with incidents of bullying.
- Take an active interest in their child's school life.
- Provide a good role model of behaviour in all their relationships.
- Discourage any form of bullying be that inside the school or at home.
- Support the St Patrick's CBC in its efforts to eliminate bullying.

Pupils must:

- Respect and live by the ethos and value system of St Patrick's St Patrick's CBC.
- Report any form of bullying to an adult as soon as possible.
- Never be part of any group which exhibits bullying behaviour towards others and must discourage it.
- As a group witnessing a bullying incident, let the bullying party know that such behaviour is not tolerated at St Patrick's CBC.

INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS AND PARENTS:

Signs/ symptoms of bullying on a child:

A child:

- is frightened of walking to or from school.
- doesn't want to go on the taxi/ bus.
- begs to be driven to school.
- changes their usual routine.
- is unwilling to go to school (school phobic).
- begins to play truant.
- wants to avoid leaving the house.
- experiences loss of friendships.
- has no friends/ is isolated and lonely.

- becomes withdrawn anxious, or lacking in confidence.
- becomes moody and bad tempered.
- starts stammering.
- attempts or threatens suicide or runs away.
- cries themselves to sleep at night or has nightmares.
- feels ill in the morning.
- begins to do poorly in school work.
- comes home with clothes torn or books damaged.
- has possessions which are damaged or "go missing".
- asks for money or starts stealing money (to pay bully).
- comes home starving (lunch/money has been stolen).
- has unexplained cuts or bruises.
- becomes aggressive, disruptive or unreasonable.
- is bullying other children or siblings.
- stops eating.
- is frightened to say what is wrong.
- gives improbable excuses for any of the above.
- is afraid to use the internet or mobile phone.
- is nervous and jumpy when a cyber message is received.

Possible signs of a suspected bully:

- New gadgets in his possession even though parents are not aware of how these came to be in possession of their child.
- Much more than usual and parents cannot account for the origin of this.
- Has no homework (is forcing pupils to allow copying of their work).
- Obsessed with cell phone secrecy.