

Setanta School Anti Bullying Policy

This anti-bullying policy operates in conjunction with the Code of Behaviour, which is used to address isolated instances of anti-social behaviour.

The school has a central role in the pupils' social moral development just as it does in their academic development. In school, we work towards standards of behaviour based on the basic principles of honesty, respect, consideration and responsibility. The individuality of each pupil needs to be accommodated while at the same time acknowledging the right of every pupil to education in a disruption free environment.

Bullying is defined as repeated aggression, whether verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against others. Examples of bullying include physical aggression, damage to property, intimidation, isolation, name-calling, taunting or 'slagging'. Pupil to pupil bullying, teacher to pupil, intra staff bullying, parent to staff and parent to pupil bullying (including a pupil other than their own) are examples of the areas where bullying may occur.

Isolated instances of aggressive behaviour, which would be dealt with under the Code of Behaviour, would not be described as bullying. However when the behaviour is systematic and ongoing, it is bullying.

The school acknowledges that there are three parties involved in bullying – those who bully, those who are bullied and those who witness the bullying. Staff and teachers bear this in mind when dealing with bullying incidences and try to support and work with all parties involved.

Aims of the Policy

- To foster a school ethos of mutual and self-respect
- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour
- To outline, promote and raise awareness of preventative approaches that can be used in response to reported incidences of bullying
- To develop a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour
- To outline procedures for noting and reporting instances of bullying behaviour
- To outline procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour

Pupil to Pupil Bullying

Stage One

Unless the incident is of a very serious nature, it will be dealt with by the classroom teacher who will talk to the pupils involved. Teachers respect the need to support the esteem of each party involved in an incident. When a teacher becomes aware that a pupil is regularly involved in incidents he/she will start a record of such incidents. The purpose of this record is:

- To aid memory by recording details of the incident
- For clarity in assessment of the situation
- For planning and intervention

Prior to a record of incidences being kept, parent(s) will be informed.

Should the action taken at this stage prove not to have resolved the issue, the staff will proceed to stage two.

Stage Two

The Principal will arrange to meet with the parents of the pupil who is seen to be bullying and separately with the parents of the victim of bullying. The pupils themselves may be required to attend part or all of these meetings. The pupil who is bullying will be placed on report. This means that the pupil's behaviour in all areas is monitored during the day. The pupil has three meetings with his/her teacher and together they decide on what is to be written for that part of the day. All positive behaviour, progress on work etc will be noted. At the end of the day, the teacher writes his/her own comment. The purpose of this report to focus as much as possible on the positive qualities and efforts of the pupil, and to motivate the pupil to move away from negative behaviour. The pupil should be able to see that parents and school are working together in his/her interest, so the co-operation of the parents is essential. Initially a review of the reports will be carried out on a weekly basis, in a meeting with the Principal, teacher, parents and pupil. If progress is being made, longer intervals between meetings may be decided upon. The pupil who is the victim of bullying will also meet with the Principal and his/her parents. The aim of such a meeting(s) will be to address emotional needs and devise strategies for the pupil to deal with the bullying. This may involve reinforcing the programme being covered in class, or other strategies.

Stage 3

It is the duty of the school to provide a safe environment for all the pupils. Should the above interventions fail and the bullying continue, a programme of appropriate sanctions may be implemented by the Principal in consultation with the parents and Board of Management. Sanctions implemented aim to encourage positive behaviour and support the esteem of the pupil. These sanctions may include a period of suspension during which there will be ongoing consultation with the parents to decide on appropriate action(s) to be taken in the best interests of the pupil. Suspension for any period of time will be reported in writing by the Principal to the Chair of the Board of Management.

Bullying by Adults

In the case of **intra-staff bullying**, Setanta School will adopt the procedures outlined in Section C (c2) of the INTO booklet: 'Working Together: Procedures and Policies for Positive Staff Relations'. A copy of this document is available for free download on the INTO website.

In the case of **Teacher – Pupil bullying**, a complaint should in the first instance be raised with the teacher in question by the parent/guardian of the pupil if possible and then if necessary referred to the Principal. Where it has not been possible to agree a framework for resolution, the matter should be referred in writing by both parties to the Board of Management for investigation.

In the case of **Parent – Teacher bullying**, the Principal should be informed in the first instance, and if deemed necessary the Board of Management should subsequently be informed in writing.

Employee grievances in relation to bullying from a parent / guardian will be taken seriously and addressed as a matter of urgency by the Principal, Chairperson and Board of Management.

In the event of an employee being harassed in an inappropriate or threatening manner, the Principal, Board of Management, Chairperson will take steps immediately, and as a matter of urgency, to protect the welfare of staff. This may include ceasing any communication between teachers & parents / guardians until the matter has been

investigated fully. These procedures may involve the matter being referred from informal to formal stages.

In more serious cases and in the interest of Health & Safety, this may involve a parent being barred from school grounds until such time as it deemed safe for staff / pupils or a satisfactory resolution has been reached.

No aspect of the anti-bullying policy shall affect the entitlement of staff members to seek legal advice in relation to their complaint outside of school.

In the case of **Parent/Visitor to the school – Pupil bullying**, the complaint should be referred in the first instance to the pupil's class teacher and subsequently to the Principal if unresolved.

In the case of **Principal – Parent/ Pupil bullying**, the matter should be raised with the Principal if possible, or referred to the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

Chairperson, Setanta School Board of Management: Michael McCabe

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