



Oatlands College

Anti-Bullying Policy

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 Oatlands 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.

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 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).
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

Definition of Bullying

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,
- cyber-bullying and
- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, 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.

Education and prevention strategies

The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyberbullying and identity-based bullying including, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:

All students will participate in Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) classes during each of the junior cycle years, where the issues of cyberbullying and identity-based bullying will be addressed.

All staff will receive regular CPD in relation to anti-bullying as part of their Croke Park hours.

Teachers of SPHE attend regular CPD and any relevant in-service courses during the school year, thus ensuring that all topics are covered in a comprehensive and sensitive manner.

Staff will be provided with guidelines for dealing with reports of bullying and harassment. The procedures outlined in this policy will be sent to all staff at the beginning of each school year. The procedures will be discussed with new members of staff by the coordinator of induction of new staff at the start of school year.

Students will be encouraged to use respectful language and behaviour in class and around the school.

Students will be encouraged to participate in the wider range of extra-curricular activities on offer, to develop their own self-esteem and assertiveness skills and to contribute to creating a positive and supportive atmosphere in school.

Through the wider school community and the pastoral care system the school promotes an atmosphere of openness and tolerance where students are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying that they experience or witness.

Students will be supervised during the school day, including breaks and lunch times.

Students will be positively encouraged to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use. There will be strict follow up and follow through with students who choose to ignore these rules.

The school system of awards will endorse desired behaviour and compliance-with the school rules and routines.

The school will promote good 'netiquette' and personal online safety through awareness of the AUP (Acceptable Use Policy) and each student will sign the Acceptable Use Form in the school journal at the beginning of each year.

The school will provide all necessary information about the Anti-Bullying Policy at meetings for incoming 1st year parents and other general meetings of parents as appropriate.

The policy will be posted on the school website and reviewed on a regular basis.

The school will involve parents and The Parents Council in awareness raising campaigns around social media.

The school will involve students through The Student Council in promoting anti-bullying and a 'sharing' culture which will dispel the philosophy of secrecy often associated with bullying and harassment.

Key respect messages will be displayed around the school and in classrooms.

The school will have an annual Inclusivity week and during this week all students will sign up to the Oatlands Anti-Bullying charter which is displayed in the corridor.

Procedures for reporting, investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour

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:

The class teacher/subject teacher/staff member who witnessed or to whom the alleged incident was reported, will record the details on a Recording Bullying Behaviour (RBB) Form.

This form will be given to the Year Head who will conduct a more in-depth investigation and ensure provision of support and appropriate sanctions application.

The Year Head is responsible for informing the Deputy Principal/Principal of the outcome of investigation and will file a copy in a secure central location where they can be accessed by the school management.

If the accusation of bullying is upheld, parents/guardians of all parties will be informed. Any appropriate sanctions will be given in accordance with the Code of Behaviour.

The Guidance Counsellor will provide support as appropriate to the victim(s) and perpetrator(s) of the bullying instance.

Supports

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying are as follows:

Procedures are in place which ensure all members of the school community are aware of how incidents of bullying are investigated and resolved.

All members of the school community will be encouraged to report any alleged incident of bullying.

Parents and students are required to co-operate with any investigation and to assist the school in resolving the matter. It is hoped that this approach will help to resolve issues and restore relationships timely.

Investigations of incidents will take place outside the classroom setting as appropriate to ensure confidentiality.

Investigations will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard for every student.

If several students are involved, each student will be interviewed individually and then as a group as necessary.

Students may be requested to write an account of the incident.

In cases where it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, parents/guardians of all parties will be informed and asked to attend a meeting thus affording them the opportunity to discuss actions to be taken by the school.

When a student has been found to have engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to them that they are in breach of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and that an appropriate sanction will apply.

In cases where bullying behaviour has been determined by the relevant teacher, the details must be recorded on the standard RBB Form.

The staff member who submitted the RBB form will be kept informed where appropriate of the outcome of any investigations by the Year Head.

In cases where the staff member considers that the issue has not been adequately addressed within 20 school days, they will consult with the Year Head. If they still are not satisfied that the matter has been dealt with appropriately, they record their concerns on the RBB Form for the attention of the Deputy Principal/ Principal. In determining whether a bullying incident has been appropriately addressed, the relevant staff member must take the following factors into account:

- Whether the bullying behaviour ceased
- Whether the issues have been successfully resolved
- Whether the relationship between relevant parties has been restored
- Any feedback from the parties involved, their parents/guardians of the in-school management team

When parents/guardians are not satisfied with the way the incident has been investigated or resolved they should be advised about the school's complaints procedures.

When parents/guardians have exhausted the school's complaints procedures and are still dissatisfied they should be advised that they have an option to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

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.

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.

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

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 and provided to the Parents' Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 14th June 2022.