

# URSULINE SECONDARY SCHOOL



## ANTI – BULLYING POLICY

The Ursuline Secondary School is a caring Christian community which respects each individual equally and which aims at providing an environment in which she can grow and develop free from fear, annoyance and intimidation. Thus, bullying cannot be tolerated.

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 the Ursuline Secondary School, Thurles 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, Circular 045/2013* (published September 2013), *Children First Act 2015* and *Child Protection Procedures 2017*

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,
- 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.

The following are some of the types of bullying behaviour that can occur amongst pupils: (please note that this is not an exhaustive list.)

## **TYPES OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR**

**Physical aggression:** This behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While pupils often engage in ‘mess fights’, they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.

**Intimidation:** Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation: it may be based on the use of very aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon. Particularly upsetting can be a facial expression which conveys aggression and / or dislike.

**Isolation / Exclusion and other relational bullying:** This occurs where a certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or all of the class group. This practice is usually initiated by the person engaged in bullying behaviour and can be difficult to detect. It may be accompanied by writing insulting remarks about the pupil in public places, by passing around notes about or drawings of the pupil or by whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard. Relational bullying occurs when a person’s attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. One of the most common forms includes control: ‘Do this or I won’t be your friend anymore’ (implied or stated); a group ganging up against one person; non-verbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumours about a person or giving them the *silent treatment*.

**Cyber-bullying:** This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, e-mail, instant messaging (IM), apps, gaming sites, chat-rooms and other online technologies. Being the target of inappropriate or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying. As cyber-bullying uses technology to perpetrate bullying behaviour and does not require face to face contact, cyber-bullying can occur at any time (day or night). Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyber-bullying.

**Name calling:** Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) which hurts, insults or humiliates should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name calling of this type refers to physical appearance, e.g., size or clothes worn. Accent or distinctive voice characteristics may attract negative attention. Academic ability can also provoke name calling. This tends to operate at two extremes. There are those who are singled out for attention because they are perceived to be weak academically. At the other extreme there are those who, because they are perceived as high achievers, are also targeted.

Word did not find any entries for your table of contents.**Damage to property:** Personal property can be the focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, school books and other learning material or interference with a pupil's locker. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.

**Extortion:** Demands for money may be made, often accompanied by threats (sometimes carried out in the event of the targeted pupil not delivering on the demand). A pupil may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to another who is engaged in bullying behaviour.

Please see Appendix 1 for additional examples of bullying behaviour.

4. The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are the six Year Heads the Principal and/or the Deputy Principals.

An individual teacher / adult who receives a complaint of bullying will report the complaint to the Principal and relevant Year Head for investigation.

**NOTE:** Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

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:

#### **SCHOOL-WIDE APPROACH:**

- A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect from all members of the school community. The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extra curricular activities. Pupils will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.
- A recognition by staff of the fact that any student can be the victim of, or perpetrator of bullying behaviour.
- Teachers will use any available opportunity to raise awareness of the unacceptability of bullying behaviour and will address this behaviour if and when it arises.
- Incoming First Years are briefed on the Anti Bullying ethos of the school during their orientation programme.
- Parents may access the *Anti Bullying Policy* on [www.uct.ie](http://www.uct.ie)

- Regular school or year group assemblies by the Principal and Year Heads etc.
- An awareness on the part of staff of the extremely serious nature of bullying and the severe consequences that may result in situations where it is not addressed. Every instance of bullying, however minor is reacted to immediately. ‘Zero tolerance’ is one of the best ways to tackle school bullying.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF CURRICULA**

- At Junior Level, the SPHE teachers and all engaged in the Well Being programme will use aspects of the SPHE programme to raise awareness of the inappropriateness of bullying behaviour. This will be done in a structured way, with the teachers deciding on a series of classes for each group.
- At senior level class teachers, RE teachers and the Guidance Counsellor will address the topic of bullying and mutual respect.
- The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.
- Prevention and awareness raising of cyber-bullying by teaching appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while on-line and also on developing a culture of reporting any concerns about cyber-bullying.
- Expert Guest Speakers for students & parents arranged annually

## **CULTURE OF REPORTING**

- Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers.
- Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way pupils will gain confidence in ‘telling’. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly. If you don’t report it, you support it. Recognise, reject, report.
- Ensure that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.
- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Involvement of the School Council in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Big Sis / Little Sis and to the promotion of a whole-school theme e.g. anti-bullying week; friendship week; random acts of kindness; getting to know people in your class / year; respecting dignity; positivity; promoting self-esteem; all of which complement bullying prevention by focusing on developing pupils’ awareness and understanding of bullying and in particular homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- Relevant teachers will be informed of any confirmed bullying behaviour so they may monitor the situation.

Ursuline Secondary School’s *Anti-Bullying Policy* is adopted in conjunction with the school’s *Code of Behaviour* and the *Internet Acceptable Use Policy* which clearly state that bullying and

harassment are unacceptable. The approach to developing positive behavior and procedures for addressing serious misconduct as outlined in the *Code of Behaviour* will be implemented.

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:

Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parent(s) / guardian(s)) understand this approach from the outset.

Serious incidents of bullying behaviour that are deemed to be potentially abusive, will in accordance with *Children First* and the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools* be referred to the HSE Children and Family Services and/or Gardaí as appropriate.

## **REPORTING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR**

Any pupil or parent / guardian may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school. All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.

Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

The primary aim for the Principal / Deputy Principals/ Year Head in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved rather than to apportion blame.

- In investigating and dealing with bullying the Principal /Deputy Principals/Year Head will exercise professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
- Parents / guardians are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring; as far as is practicable, the relationship of the parties involved as quickly as possible.
- Incidents will usually be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually as far as is practicable. Thereafter, all those involved will be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member will be asked for her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements.
- Interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned, Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way.
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour; the relevant teacher will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why.

- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the parents / guardians of the parties involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter. Where it has been determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour the school's Code of Behaviour will be applied. This will be a private matter between her parents and the school.

## **FOLLOW UP AND RECORDING**

In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his / her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:

- Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased
- Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable
- Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable
- Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents / guardians or the school Principal.

Follow up meetings with the relevant parties involved should be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.

Where a parent / guardian is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents / guardians must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.

In the event that a parent / guardian has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents / guardians of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

## **RECORDING OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR**

All recording of bullying incidents will be done in an objective and factual manner. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviours are as follows:

### **Informal Pre-Determination That Bullying Has Occurred**

- All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher;
- While all reports including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher must keep a written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.
- The relevant teacher must inform the principal of all incidents being investigated.

### **Informal Determination that Bullying has Occurred**

If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must keep appropriate written records which will assist his / her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

## **Formal – Appendix 3 Template (from DES Procedures)**

The relevant teacher must use the recording template at Appendix 3 to record the bullying in cases where he / she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he / she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred.

When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal. Due consideration needs to be given to where these records are kept, who has access to them, and how long they will be retained.

**7.** The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:

- All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience e.g.
  - Pastoral care system
  - Big Sis / Little Sis
  - School Council
  - Tutor / Year Head system
  - Pastoral Care Team

If pupils require counselling or further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.

Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

## **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 reviewed and adopted by the Board of Management on March 14, 2018

**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. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

**12.** This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management every two years. 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. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Date: March 14, 2018

Date of next review: March 2020



# APPENDIX 1

## EXAMPLES OF BULLYING BEHAVIOURS

<p><b>General behaviours which apply to all</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc.</li> <li>• Physical aggression</li> <li>• Damage to property</li> <li>• Name calling</li> <li>• Slagging</li> <li>• The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person</li> <li>• Offensive graffiti</li> <li>• Extortion</li> <li>• Intimidation</li> <li>• Insulting or offensive gestures</li> <li>• Invasion of personal space</li> <li>• A combination of any of the types listed.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cyber</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Denigration:</b> Spreading rumors, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation</li> <li>• <b>Harassment:</b> Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual</li> <li>• <b>Impersonation:</b> Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name</li> <li>• <b>Flaming:</b> Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight</li> <li>• <b>Trickery:</b> Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online</li> <li>• <b>Outing:</b> Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images</li> <li>• <b>Exclusion:</b> Purposefully excluding someone from an online group</li> <li>• <b>Cyber stalking:</b> Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety</li> <li>• Silent telephone/mobile phone call</li> <li>• Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls</li> <li>• Abusive text messages</li> <li>• Abusive email</li> <li>• Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook / Ask.fm / Twitter / You Tube or on games consoles</li> <li>• Abusive website comments / Blogs / Pictures</li> <li>• Abusive posts on any form of communication technology</li> </ul>
<p><b>Identity Based Behaviours</b>  <b>Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation</b> (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).</p>	
<p><b>Homophobic and Transgender</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation</li> <li>• Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation</li> <li>• Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian...used in a derogatory manner</li> <li>• Physical intimidation or attacks</li> <li>• Threats</li> </ul>
<p><b>Race, nationality, ethnic background &amp; membership of the Traveller community</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background</li> <li>• Exclusion on the basis of any of the above</li> </ul>
<p><b>Relational</b></p>	<p>This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Malicious gossip</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Isolation &amp; exclusion</li> <li>• Ignoring</li> <li>• Excluding from the group</li> <li>• Taking someone's friends away</li> <li>• "Bitching"</li> <li>• Spreading rumours</li> <li>• Breaking confidence</li> <li>• Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear</li> </ul>
<b>Sexual</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching</li> <li>• Harassment</li> </ul>
<b>Special Educational Needs/ Disability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name calling</li> <li>• Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs</li> <li>• Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying</li> <li>• Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues.</li> <li>• Mimicking a person's disability</li> <li>• Setting others up for ridicule</li> </ul>