



ANTI- BULLYING POLICY/ AGREEMENT

Approved by the Board of Management: 09-11-2022

REVIEWED BY	DATE



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY/AGREEMENT

The aim of this policy is to ensure the core principles of respect, and responsibility for the welfare of others in the school community is evident in all student interactions. To recognise and encourage high self-esteem among students, to provide a safe, pleasant atmosphere in the college.

This Policy reflects the values, ethos and mission of Rath Dara Community College by

- ❖ *Providing a safe and secure environment for learning.*
- ❖ *By promoting respect for the diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life in society.*
- ❖ *By promoting students' responsibility for their behaviour by creating habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the inter-dependence of people in groups and communities.*
- ❖ *By recognising and taking particular care of at-risk students and using restorative measures and monitoring systems to provide early intervention when/if necessary to respond to the needs, fears and anxieties of individual students in a sensitive manner.*

The goals of our anti bullying policy :

1. To create a school ethos which encourages students to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
2. To raise awareness of bullying as an unacceptable form of behaviour with school management, teachers, students, parents/guardians.
3. To create a school ethos that embraces inclusivity and celebrates diversity.
4. To ensure that the school's Wellbeing programme raises awareness of the factors associated with bullying behaviour and develops appropriate knowledge, skills and behaviours. It is vital that the anti bullying policy is fully implemented by all parties.
5. To take practical actions to prevent incidents of bullying behaviour e.g. to ensure comprehensive supervision and monitoring measures through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation.
6. To set out procedures for reporting, investigating, recording and addressing incidents of bullying behaviour

(Department of Education and Science, Guidelines on Countering Bullying in Primary and Post-Primary Schools, 1993.)

Definition of Bullying:

Bullying is repeated aggression conducted by an individual or a group against others – such aggressive behaviour may be verbal, psychological or physical.

(Department of Education and Science, Guidelines on countering bullying behaviour in Primary and Post Primary schools, 1993).

For the purposes of this, the term bullying also encompasses harassment, sexual harassment and cyber aggression, defined as follows:

Harassment: any form of unwanted conduct in relation to any of the nine grounds named in the equality legislation that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment for the victim.

Sexual harassment: any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment for the victim.

Cyber Aggression: can be defined as any form of communication mediated through an electronic device where the purpose is to harm or otherwise exploit an individual physically, sexually and/or emotionally (Grigg, 2010). Cyber Aggression can include

singular incidents as well as those that are repeated.

The nine grounds are *gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion, and membership of the traveller community.*

Types of bullying behaviour

- Physical aggression
- Damage to property
- Extortion
- Intimidation
- Gestures
- Silent telephone/mobile phone calls
- Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls
- Abusive text messages
- Abusive email/website messages
- The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person
- Isolation & exclusion
- Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc.
- Name calling
- Slagging
- Humiliation
- The “look”
- Invasion of personal space
- Recording or taking an individual’s photograph without permission
- 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.
- And any forms of the above which could be carried out online.
- 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.
- 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 this definition of bullying.

This list is not exhaustive.

Students should acknowledge that what is perceived by them to be innocent horseplay, slagging and playing pranks may be extremely hurtful, stressful and humiliating to others.

Responsibilities:

The school has a responsibility to put in place a pastoral care programme, which, in so far as it can, will be proactive in preventing bullying. Such a programme will raise awareness, mentor students and promote self-esteem.

The school has a responsibility to address incidents of bullying should they arise. This will take the form of support for the victims and the perpetrators of the bullying through restorative practices as well as reflective practice activities if the bullying persists.

Students have a responsibility to respect the rights of others

Students have a responsibility to report incidents of bullying against themselves or others.

Parents are strongly encouraged to contact the school as soon as they suspect their son/daughter is being subjected to or is engaging in bullying behaviour.

Procedures:

1. If students are upset and feel they are being bullied or if they have information regarding a bullying incident, they should talk to their tutor, a teacher, or the principal/deputy principal.
2. We encourage students to seek advice should they need to. The staff member should respect the student's wishes in so far as this may be done without endangering him/her.
3. The student(s) may be asked to give a written account of the event(s) that are causing distress.
4. Instances of ongoing bullying will be reported to the Senior Management Team. The college authorities will investigate all complaints. The staff will remain vigilant regarding repeated incidents.
5. Cases of bullying will be dealt with discreetly where possible. In line with the school ethos, students will be supported through the process.
6. All reports of bullying, no matter how trivial, should be recorded, investigated and dealt with by teachers. In that way students will gain confidence in telling. This confidence factor is of vital importance.
7. Recording of reports of bullying: An online record book for the purpose of recording reports of bullying can be found on RCC Onestop and it is imperative that all matters relating to an incident of bullying should be entered in this book.

An allegation of bullying will be dealt with as follows:

In the event of a bullying incident against another student(s) or member of staff:

1. The person/people involved will be advised to cease this behaviour and where necessary steps will be taken to a) resolve any misunderstandings b) guidance will be given to change behaviour where necessary.
2. In serious incidents or the continuation of an initial minor incident the parents/guardians of all parties involved will be informed and if necessary a meeting/meetings will be arranged.
3. If the situation does not improve other steps will be taken, including involving the Student Support Team, the BFL teacher and the Behavioural Council. If necessary, the Principal with the Board of Management may discipline the student(s) carrying out the act of bullying by suspension.
4. Incidents of bullying reported to the school authorities will be recorded.
5. In cases where it is considered that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after it was determined that bullying behaviour occurred, a report must be made to the DLP.

The relevant teacher (the teacher who the bullying was initially reported to or the teacher who was in charge of the investigation) must record the bullying behaviour in the standardised recording template at Appendix A

The means of bullying are constantly changing and types of bullying behaviour can be expanded in light of the experience of the school community.

We ask you to sign our school Anti-Bullying Agreement.

EVERYBODY HAS THE RIGHT TO LIVE IN A HAPPY AND SAFE ENVIRONMENT.
RATHDARA CC BELIEVES BULLYING IS UNACCEPTABLE AND WILL NOT BE TOLERATED IN OUR SCHOOL.

Student Name: _____

Signed: _____

Parent: _____

Appendix A Template for recording bullying behaviour

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name _____ Class _____

2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

3. Source of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es))*

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Pupil concerned | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other Pupil | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Parent | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Teacher | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other | <input type="checkbox"/> |

4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))*

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------------|
| Playground | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Classroom | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Corridor | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Toilets School | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Bus | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other | <input type="checkbox"/> |

5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern

6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) *

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------|
| Physical Aggression | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Cyber-bullying | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Damage to Property | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Intimidation | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Isolation/Exclusion | <input type="checkbox"/> |

- Malicious Gossip
- Name Calling
- Other (specify)

7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:

- Homophobic
- Disability/SEN related
- Racist
- Membership of Traveller community
- Other (specify)

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

9. Details of actions taken

Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher)

Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

Appendix B ACTIONS TO PREVENT BULLYING

1. Wellbeing: is timetabled as part of the Junior cycle core curriculum. SPHE provides students with opportunities to develop the skills and competencies to care for themselves and others and to make informed decisions about their health, personal lives and social development. The issue of bullying is dealt with in each of the three years of the SPHE junior cycle programme.

2. Publishing and Publicising an Anti-Bullying Code

Our school's Anti-Bullying Policy is included as part of our Mission Statement, the School Plan, The Guidance Plan, the SPHE programme, the Religious Education Programme, transfer programme, HSCL booklets etc. All Students are asked to sign the anti-bullying agreement at the start of each Academic Year.

3. Promotion of Rath Dara as a zero tolerance zone for bullying behaviour.

1. Displaying anti bullying posters in classrooms and the assembly area.
2. Annual Friendship week: poster competitions, presentations, drama, workshops etc will highlight the issue. During this week issues related to bullying will be promoted through cross curricular teaching approaches. The school's pastoral care team will take a leadership role in coordinating this event annually. It will take place during the first term prior to the Christmas Holidays. The week will be evaluated annually.
3. As a school community we value, welcome and encourage parental involvement in the school. Anti bullying awareness will thus be promoted through the Home School Community Liaison scheme and drawing attention to it at parent/teacher meetings, open days, through the Local Committee and parents' nights.
4. We recognise that students have a central role to play in building a school community which does not tolerate bullying. The Student Council is a vital link in this process.
5. Active involvement in the Yellow Flag programme, which promotes inclusion and celebrates diversity.
6. FUSE Anti Bullying Programme as part of Junior Cycle Wellbeing.

4. Supervision and Monitoring

All teaching staff will be mindful of bullying behaviour on the corridors and in the general environs of the school. Some years ago the decision was made that teachers would be classroom based. Classroom based teachers should facilitate the supervision of students on the corridor area near their room during class change over periods. Teachers involved in supervision and substitution duties must be alert to potential bullying during their supervision/substitution periods. Every

teacher has a responsibility to challenge bullying behaviour and it is the responsibility of every student to cooperate with every staff member in the school in this regard.

Annual School Evaluation Survey :potential bullying danger spots within the school.

CPD around the Child Safety and Bullying

Adherence to the ICT Acceptable Usage Policy

5. Involving Parents/Guardians and the Wider Community

Parents as the primary educators of their children. Parents/guardians therefore have an important role and responsibility in promoting a consistent message against bullying. Parents must emphasise that bullying behaviour will not be tolerated. Parents must also encourage their children to tell an adult should they become aware of bullying. Parents will be made aware of our bullying policy. Encouraged to become involved in Friendship week.

As a community college we recognise and value the important role of the community in education. Through the Local Committee local schools, J.L.O., community Gardai, Youth Workers and other community personnel who come into regular contact with our students will have an opportunity to support our Anti bullying policy. This support can be done in a practical way by Rath Dara staff and student representatives regularly updating the Local Committee on our policy and events such as the anti bullying week.

Appendix C : Procedures

Behaviour	Minor/initial incidents of bullying.	Subsequent/more serious incidents of bullying.
<p>Minor/initial incidents of bullying.</p>	<p>After the report has been made, the tutor/yearhead must be informed and then agree who will investigate the incident.</p> <p>If the disclosure is made the yearhead will record it in the Incident Report Form.</p> <p>Procedures for managing bullying are based on restorative practices.</p>	<p>Should a subsequent incident of bullying occur, parents should then be informed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Reported incidents will be investigated by the relevant yearhead and members of the Care Team may be involved at that stage. · It is important that confidentiality be maintained. <p>Where the matter is not resolved and the behaviour persists.</p> <p>Principal/Deputy principal become involved. The SST become involved and counselling is offered. Anger Management programme may be offered. Referral to an outside agency may be deemed necessary at this stage. (such as DDLETB Psychological Support Service, JLO, WEB.</p> <p>When all the above procedures have been followed At the discretion of the principal the incident(s) will be referred to the Board of Management.</p> <p>At that stage the future in the school of the student(s) who is/are displaying persistent bullying behaviours may be considered. Parents have the right to appeal the decision of the BOM.</p>

Follow-up steps to be taken: Referral to an outside agency for support may be made.

- Records are to be kept for a period of six years and then placed in the archive.

Other Unacceptable Behaviours

Behaviour	Procedure
Pupil to Teacher	<p>teacher to meet with the student and explain the inappropriate nature of the behaviour. If the behaviour persists, tutor/yearhead becomes involved. Failing a resolution, parents are invited in. If the situation is ongoing, counselling and per referral to the deputy principal and ultimately to the Principal / Board of Management. Note: At all stages a record should be kept of the investigation by the teacher involved in the first instance and subsequently by the appropriate yearhead. If the inappropriate behaviour continues towards the teacher, all records should be passed over to the principal.</p>
Teacher to Pupil	<p>The teacher should be made aware that his/her behaviour is inappropriate. If the matter is not resolved at this stage, the matter may have to be addressed by the principal.</p>
Teacher to Parent.	<p>The teacher should be made aware that his/her behaviour is inappropriate. If the matter is not resolved at this stage, the matter may have to be addressed by the principal.</p>
Parent to Teacher	<p>The parent should be made aware that his/her behaviour is inappropriate. If the matter is not resolved at this stage, the matter may have to be addressed by the principal.</p>
Teacher to Teacher Behaviours	<p>As part of DDLETB, Rath Dara is committed to ensuring a workplace environment that is characterised by mutual respect, tolerance and affirmation.</p> <p>Harassment and bullying is behaviour that is destructive to a positive working atmosphere and will not be tolerated. All staff have the right to work in an environment free from any form of harassment, bullying or intimidatory behaviour. Procedures in this regard are dealt with under DDLETB complaints procedure</p>