



# DOMINICAN COLLEGE

## Taylor's Hill

### ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the Code of Behaviour Guidelines issued by the NEWB and Circular 45/2013, the Board of Management of Dominican College, Taylor's Hill, 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.
- 1.2 The Anti-Bullying Policy of Dominican College, Taylor's Hill incorporates the values and aspirations of our school ethos and our Code of Positive Behaviour. Our school crest contains the Latin word *Veritas* which means Truth. Students are encouraged to believe in and speak the truth at all times. This core value is also encouraged when it comes to both reporting and admitting to bullying behaviour in the school. Dominican education seeks to accentuate the importance of feeling welcome and valued in the school environment. Likewise inclusivity and diversification are key elements which are also recognised in our Anti-Bullying Policy.
- 1.3 When management, teaching staff, parents and students share these aspirations and values, bullying behaviour has less chance of succeeding in a positive and healthy school environment.
- 1.4 Effective leadership is a key principle of best practice. This can only be achieved where all those concerned in the education process co-operate fully on an on-going basis. The teaching staff are role models for the students at all times.
- 1.5 Prevention of bullying behaviour is a key consideration in our Anti-Bullying Policy. Creating awareness is therefore a very important factor in the prevention of such behaviour. Assistance will be given to victims of bullying behaviour and every effort made to ensure that it is known such behaviour is not acceptable in our school.
- 1.6 Our policy also states that any form of harassment is totally unacceptable at any time within the school environment. Under recent equality legislation, nine grounds are used. These include gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religions, age diversity, race, membership of the traveller community. (Equality Act 2002)

1.7 Finally, parental involvement and co-operation are vital in the running of a successful Anti-Bullying Policy. By working closely with the relevant teachers, issues of bullying behaviour can be rectified more successfully.

## **2 OBJECTIVES OF THIS POLICY**

**2.1** To create and enforce an Anti-Bullying Policy which promotes respect, inclusivity and acceptance of diversity.

**2.2** To create a caring environment which fosters and encourages mutual respect and a positive school spirit.

**2.3** To develop formal procedures for the investigation of reported incidents of bullying behaviour.

**2.4** To encourage an awareness of the seriousness and impact of any form of bullying behaviour.

**2.5** To provide support for those affected by bullying behaviour and those engaged in bullying behaviour.

**2.6** To develop practical preventative measures such as continuous supervision and monitoring.

## **3 KEY PRINCIPLES OF BEST PRACTICE**

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:

**3.1** A positive school culture and climate which:

3.1.1 promotes respectful relationships across the school community.

3.1.2 Encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment.

3.1.3 Is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity.

**3.2** Effective leadership

**3.3** A school-wide approach

**3.4** A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact on our school community.

- 3.5 Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that:
  - 3.5.1 build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils
  - 3.5.2 explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- 3.6 Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils
- 3.7 Supports for staff
- 3.8 Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies)
- 3.9 On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy.

#### **4. DEFINITION AND TYPES OF BULLYING**

- 4.1 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.*

- 4.2 The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- 4.2.1 Malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying
- 4.2.2 Deliberate isolation/exclusion: This occurs where a certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or all of the class/group
- 4.2.3 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.
- 4.2.4 Name calling: Persistent name calling directed at the same individual(s) which hurts, insults or humiliates should be regarded a form of bullying behaviour.

- 4.2.5 Damage of 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 pupils locker or bicycle. The content of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.
- 4.2.6 Extortion: Demands for money may be made which may also be accompanied by threats (sometimes carried out in the event of the targeted pupil not delivering on demand). A pupil may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to another who is engaged in bullying behaviour.
- 4.2.7 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.

4.3 Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the Dominican College Code of Positive 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.

4.4 The school reserves the right to apply its anti-bullying policy in respect of bullying that occurs at a location, activity, function or program that is not school related if in the opinion of the Principal and/or Board of Management the alleged bullying has created a hostile environment at school for the victim, has infringed on the rights of the victim at the school and/or has materially or substantially disrupted the education process or the orderly operation of the school.

## **5 RESPONSIBILITY FOR DEALING WITH BULLYING**

5.1 The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows:

1. Year Heads
2. Guidance Counsellor
3. Anti-Bullying Coordinator
4. Deputy Principal
5. Principal

5.2 Reports of suspected bullying can be made to any teacher. That teacher should pass such reports on to the relevant Year Head. If they do so they should take initial notes on what was reported to them and pass these notes on to the Year Head.

## **6 EDUCATION & PREVENTION STRATEGIES**

6.1 This policy seeks to attempt the prevention, and not just the control of bullying behaviour in our school. The emphasis is on the creation of awareness of the existence and impact of bullying behaviour. The onus is on all of those involved, management, teaching staff, parents and students to be familiar with the issue, and in particular with the most recent serious phenomenon of Cyber Bullying. The following actions have been selected as a means of helping in the prevention of bullying behaviour in our school.

### **6.2 Action 1: Creating Awareness Through Education**

- 6.2.1 All teaching and non-teaching staff need to be vigilant when it comes to detecting bullying behaviour in the classroom situation or on the school premises.
- 6.2.2 It is the responsibility of management, teaching staff, parents and students to familiarise themselves with what actually constitutes bullying behaviour and their role in its prevention.
- 6.2.3 Specific subjects like SPHE, CSPE and RE contain several common concepts linked to bullying behaviour. The SPHE syllabus provides for modules on bullying which allows for focused class time on the examination of bullying behaviour and its effects. The SPHE department will liaise with the CSPE and RE departments in relation to the delivery of content around the area of bullying.
- 6.2.4 Tolerance of and respect for others should be taught in all subject areas where it might arise.
- 6.2.5 Student involvement and input concerning bullying behaviour could be encouraged by use of questions, class discussions, poster competitions and talks by guest speakers.
- 6.2.6 Promotion of the school ethos of acceptance and inclusion.
- 6.2.7 Fostering an atmosphere of respect and friendship within the school on an ongoing basis

- 6.2.8 Fostering a culture of zero-tolerance for bullying.
- 6.2.9 Encouraging students, parents and staff-members to report suspected bullying.
- 6.2.10 Encouraging by-standers to display an active disapproval of bullying behaviour.
- 6.2.11 Year group assemblies should be used to address issues of respect, tolerance and bullying.
- 6.2.12 Active student involvement in preventing and combating bullying is to be encouraged. The Anti-Bullying Coordinator will work with students to identify the most effective means of implementing this.

### **6.3 Action 2: Supervision and Monitoring:**

- 6.3.1 Adequate supervision and monitoring by management and teaching staff is a key factor in the prevention of bullying behaviour in the school.
- 6.3.2 Students are carefully supervised by teaching staff during breaks and also in the area of extra-curricular activities.
- 6.3.3 Non-teaching staff are also required to be vigilant and report incidences of bullying behaviour to the Year Heads.
- 6.3.4 The Anti-Bullying Committee will also help in monitoring bullying behaviour.
- 6.3.5 Learning Support teachers will monitor vulnerable and at risk students and liaise with Year Heads concerning bullying behaviour.
- 6.3.6 The Guidance Counsellor will provide counselling for both the victim and the instigator of the bullying behaviour.
- 6.3.7 Students are supervised by teaching staff in the computer rooms and are not allowed unsupervised access at any time.

### **6.4 Action 3: Involving Parents and the Wider Community:**

- 6.4.1 Parents play a very valuable role when it comes to assisting the school in dealing with bullying behaviour. Parents' opinions and contributions can be encouraged through the Parents Council and communicated to school management.
- 6.4.2 Parents and students together can combine their efforts to ensure that bullying behaviour is detected and reported to the relevant individuals in the school.
- 6.4.3 Talks on bullying and workshops could be provided to parents. Gardai can be invited to give talks and offer useful advice to parents and students concerning bullying behaviour.
- 6.4.4 Community Youth Workers and other agencies can also contribute by giving talks and workshops to parents and students in the school.

### **6.5 Action 4: Friendship Week:**

- 6.5.1 Activities will be held to raise awareness about bullying behaviour. Student posters encouraging good team spirit and achievement will be clearly visible around the school.

### **6.6 Action 5: Students' Achievements Awards Ceremony:**

- 6.6.1 The objective is to record positive behaviour and excellence in the school.
- 6.6.2 Random acts of kindness shown towards fellow students will be encouraged and highlighted. This could include welcoming new students into the school, and befriending the international student population.

## **7. INVESTIGATION, FOLLOW-UP & RECORDING PROCEDURES**

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:

### **Investigation Procedures:**

7.1. The relevant teacher meets with the student reporting the bullying incident. The procedure to be followed should adhere to the guidelines below.

The Year Head or other relevant teacher should:

7.1.1. Meet with the child in a private place e.g. office or empty classroom. It should not be investigated within the classroom environment to ensure that the privacy of those concerned is respected.

7.1.2. If deemed appropriate, invite another member of staff to attend.

7.1.3. Be welcoming, accepting and non-judgemental but remain unemotional and carry out the interview in a formal and business-like manner.

7.1.4. Obtain the full facts (focus on the facts about what actually happened, was said etc.). Ask questions that will ascertain those facts – who, when, where, what was said, what was your response, who else was present etc.

7.1.5. Perhaps ask the student to write down their account of what happened.

7.1.6. Keep notes on what was said (factual, non-judgemental or emotional).

7.1.7. Keep in mind the definition of bullying and establish if this fits in with that definition or if it is a once-off situation.

7.1.8. Establish if there are other witnesses to the alleged bullying behaviour.

7.2. If there are other witnesses to the alleged bullying behaviour:

7.2.1. Speak with all the witnesses if possible or a selection of them.

7.2.2. Interviews with the witnesses should be on a one-to-one basis.

7.2.3. You may ask another teacher to assist in this if there are a number of witnesses.

7.2.4. Focus on the actual facts of what occurred.



- 7.2.5. Record the facts of what is reported.
- 7.3. Determine if bullying behaviour has taken place or if this is outside the remit of the Anti-Bullying Policy and in that of the Code of Behaviour. If bullying has occurred contact the parents of the victim if deemed appropriate.
- 7.4. In circumstances where the bullying behaviour is deemed to be of a serious nature it should be brought to the attention of the Principal or Deputy Principal at an early stage.
- 7.5. If bullying behaviour is deemed to have taken place, meet with the perpetrator/s of the bullying behaviour:
  - 7.5.1. Be non-judgemental and non-confrontational
  - 7.5.2. Outline the behaviour that has been reported.
  - 7.5.3. Do not take a 'blame approach'.
  - 7.5.4. Record the facts of what is reported.
  - 7.5.5. Be sure that the student knows that their side of the story is being listened to.
  - 7.5.6. Try to get the person to see the situation from the other person's perspective.
  - 7.5.7. Contact the parents of the student and inform them of the situation and the process if deemed appropriate.
  - 7.5.8. In the case that the person refuses to take responsibility or admit involvement:
    - 7.5.8.1. It should be made clear that the specific behaviour must cease immediately.
    - 7.5.8.2. Point out that there may be disciplinary implications if the situation is not resolved.
  - 7.5.9. Where a group of alleged bullies are involved in a bullying situation, each one must be individually questioned and their responses recorded.

- 7.6. The relevant teacher may decide to confer with the Principal or Deputy Principal before parents are contacted (depending on the gravity of the situation).
- 7.7. In most instances it is envisaged that the bullying behaviour will cease at this stage. The relevant teacher may meet with both students together in an attempt to restore good relations between them.
- 7.8. If the situation is of a serious nature and it is unclear as to whether or not it will be resolved after the steps outlined above, request that the parents of the perpetrator attend the school.
- 7.9. A record of all the steps taken will be kept by the relevant teacher and, upon completion of the process; a copy will be given to the Anti-Bullying Coordinator.
- 7.10. The victim of the bullying behaviour will be encouraged to report any further instances of bullying behaviour immediately.
- 7.11. In instances where the bullying behaviour is of a serious nature the perpetrator may be sanctioned up to and including suspension and/or expulsion.
- 7.12. In the case of repeated instances of the bullying behaviour despite earlier interventions and warnings, the student may face disciplinary proceeding up to and including suspension and exclusion in the case of the most serious bullying behaviour in line with the school Code of Behaviour.
- 7.13. Where the relevant teacher is of the opinion that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately dealt with after a period of 20 days, it must be recorded on the pro-forma template contained in Appendix 1 of this policy document.

**Follow Up Procedures:**

- 7.14. In instances where bullying behaviour has taken place the victim and perpetrator should be referred to the Guidance Counsellor for follow up meetings. The Year Head should be kept informed of progress.
- 7.15. The Year Head should monitor the situation on an ongoing basis to ensure that there has been no repeat of the bullying behaviour.
- 7.16. The victim is encouraged to report any repeated instances of the bullying behaviour.

7.17. Should the bullying behaviour continue or re-occur, the Year Head should intervene and if necessary, escalate the matter to the Deputy Principal or Principal.

## **Recording & Reporting Procedures**

7.18. All reports of bullying behaviour should be recorded by the relevant teacher as outlined in 7.1.4, 7.1.6, 7.2.6, 7.5.4 and 7.13.

7.19. Each stage of a bullying report and investigation should be recorded.

7.20. Year Heads should inform the Anti-Bullying Coordinator of all instances of bullying reported. The Anti-Bullying Coordinator will maintain a confidential file of reported bullying incidents and will provide this file for the Principal periodically.

7.21. At least once in every school term, the Principal must provide a report to the Board of Management setting out:

7.21.1. the overall number of bullying cases reported since the previous report to the Board and

7.21.2. confirmation that all cases referred to at 7.21.1 above have been or are being, dealt with in accordance with the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

7.22. The minutes of the Board of Management meeting must record the above but in doing so must not include any identifying details of the pupils involved.

## **8. SUPPORTING STUDENTS AFFECTED BY BULLYING**

A programme of support for pupils who have been bullied shall be put in place. Such pupils may need counselling and/or opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed. The following supports will be put in place for such students:

8.1. Referral to the school Guidance Counsellor.

8.2. Meetings with the relevant Year Head

8.3. Lunchtime club for students to have lunchtime activities to get involved in and to engage with a wider social circle.

8.4. Pairing with other students.

8.5. Encouragement to report further bullying instances

## **9. THE ANTI-BULLYING COMMITTEE**

- 9.1. The role of the Anti-Bullying Committee is to ensure the Anti-Bullying Policy in Dominican College is fully adhered to at all times.
- 9.2. It is comprised of various members of the teaching staff including the Principal, Deputy Principal, Anti-Bullying Coordinator, Guidance Counsellor, teachers of subject areas like Religious Education, S.P.H.E and C.S.P.E.
- 9.3. It liaises with other relevant teachers, Year Heads, Class Tutors and class teachers and is in regular contact with these colleagues re bullying behaviour in the school.
- 9.4. It ensures that the school's Anti-Bullying Policy document is made available to all new teaching staff, substitute teachers and trainee teachers.
- 9.5. The Co-Ordinator attends Year Head Meetings if an issue concerning bullying behaviour needs to be addressed.
- 9.6. It keeps the necessary records of meetings and agendas, which in the interest of privacy are stored in a confidential file.
- 9.7. The Anti-Bullying Co-Ordinator attends any relevant in-service or workshops on school bullying and will plan a Friendship Week in November of each year.
- 9.8. The Committee will meet and review the Anti-Bullying policy every year, and the new draft will be forwarded to the Principal for presentation to the Board of Management.

## **10. SUPERVISION & MONITORING OF STUDENTS**

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.

## **11. PREVENTION OF HARRASSMENT**

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.

## **12 RATIFICATION, DISSEMINATION & REVIEW**

**12.1.** This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2014.

**12.2.** 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 of Education & Skills and Le Chéile if requested.

**12.3.** 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 Le Chéile and the Department of Education & Skills.

**This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2014. It is due for review in Term 3 2014-15.**

## Appendix 1: 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

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

Pupil concerned	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

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

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other	

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

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

Physical Aggression		Cyber-bullying	
Damage to Property		Intimidation	
Isolation/Exclusion		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 \_\_\_\_\_