



SANCTA MARIA COLLEGE

Louisburgh Co. Mayo



Anti Bullying Policy

Mission Statement:

Sancta Maria College is a voluntary Catholic secondary school under the trusteeship of CEIST whose core values are inclusive of the Mercy philosophy of education.

We welcome, care for and support all within the school community through the promotion of

- Respect
- Being just & responsible
- Quality teaching and learning
- An inclusive community
- Life-long learning

Mercy Philosophy of Education

Inspired by the vision of Catherine McAuley, Mercy Education is committed to holistic development and to the achievement of the full potential of each student, particularly those who are disadvantaged or marginalized.

It is a process informed and influenced by the teaching and example of Jesus Christ and is conducted in an atmosphere of care, respect and joy.

CEIST is committed to on-going whole-school development in collaboration and partnership with the Board of Management, staff, parents and the wider community.

Operating Context

A Board of Management operates Sancta Maria College within the following guidelines:

- In the context of, and within the parameters of Department of Education and Science [D.E.S.] regulations and programmes;
- Within the rights of the Trustees as set out in the Education Act;
- Following the Religious and Educational Philosophy of the Sisters of Mercy;
- Within the funding and resources available.

The following policy statement applies to the student body of Sancta Maria College and its purpose is their care and protection in accordance with the school ethos.

Behaviour of staff is dealt with in other school policies.

Bullying can be defined as repeated aggression, be it verbal, psychological or physical, which is conducted by an individual or group against others. It is behaviour that is intentionally aggravating and intimidating and occurs mainly among children in social environments such as schools. It includes behaviour such as name-calling, teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting, exclusion, extortion, interfering with personal property such as clothes or books, abusive phone

messages, texting and any form of homophobic bullying etc., by one or more pupils against another individual or group. The recipient of such behaviour showing vulnerability or distress often unwittingly perpetuates it.

The role of the school is to provide the highest possible standard of education for all its pupils and a stable, secure learning environment is an essential requirement to achieve this goal. Bullying behaviour undermines and dilutes the quality of education and causes psychological damage to the person. The prevention of bullying is a top priority of the school and requires co-operation between students, parents, school staff and the whole school community. The reporting of bullying is not telling tales but responsible behaviour and the following procedures are in place to address and minimise the most pernicious problem.

Awareness

- There will be an awareness campaign at the beginning of each school year focusing on the positive features of school community life and the opportunity it present for each student to grow to maturity in a happy and challenging environment which respects diversity and individuality. The Pastoral Care Team, the Chaplain, and the Counsellor and other appropriate members of staff in consultation with the Principal will determine the content and style of the campaign.
- The Students Council and the Mentors will be encouraged to alert staff of incidents of bullying and will be given information on recognising signs and symptoms of bullying.
- Class teachers will at regular intervals remind their students of their rights and responsibilities to encourage the reporting of incidents of bullying.
- Subject teachers can influence attitudes to bullying in a positive manner through a range of material on the curriculum.
- The Principal and the Parent's Council will raise awareness among parents by asking them to impress upon their children the importance of appropriate behaviour when out of their care such as travelling to and from school, recreation time and while in school. This will include information to help parents to recognise the signs and symptoms of bullying.

Reporting Procedure

Students may report directly to any member of school staff if they are being bullied or see incidents of bullying. Alternatively, they can avail of a letterbox at the Secretary's office if they wish to convey information by note or letter. Parents or any member of the community may report to the school authorities by letters, phone or by calling to the school on behalf of student(s) that they are concerned about or incidents they feel should be investigated. Non-teaching staff and school bus drivers will particularly be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying witnessed by them or mentioned to them.

A Bullying Report Form will be available from the Secretary's office to any student and his/her parents/guardians who wishes to use it.

This form will be used firstly to record the initial findings of the reports that have been investigated by class or subject teachers and secondly those, which require further action or monitoring. Pastoral Care co-ordinator will meet and work with both victim and perpetrator regarding a particular incident.

If the bullying is deemed to be serious or persistent it will be reported to the Principal or Deputy Principal and the parents/guardians of both parties will be informed by Year Head, their co-operation sought and appropriate action agreed.

If the issue is not resolved the School Disciplinary Committee will examine the case and decide on a course of action such as counselling, monitoring, detention, suspension. If the problem persists it may recommend to the Principal, acting

in the overall interests of the whole school community, to seek the assistance of agencies outside the school, such as health board social workers, family doctors, Garda Siochana etc., as appropriate. At this stage the Board of Management should be fully informed of the situation so that it will be in a position to act in the best interests of the school community with due regard to the rights of the parties involved.

Finally it is recognised that the best policy against bullying is the fostering of an atmosphere in school which encourages respect, trust, consideration and support for others and where the school takes particular care of 'at risk' pupils and uses its monitoring system to provide early intervention when/if necessary and responds to the needs, fears or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner.

This policy will be subject to review at regular intervals.

Review:

This code was ratified by the Board of Management on October 12th 2010. It was proposed by Mr J. Egan and seconded by Ms. B. Donnelly. This code will be reviewed and revised in the light of changing circumstances, if such changes occur. Otherwise it will be reviewed in 2012/13.

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