



ST DOMINIC'S
Sixth Form College

Anti-Bullying Policy

St. Dominic's is a Roman Catholic Sixth Form College committed to the personal and spiritual growth of all its members based on Christian values, academic excellence and high-quality pastoral care.

Context

The Mission of the College is to promote 'academic excellence' within the context of strong pastoral and spiritual support. To achieve this we must ensure that the highest standards of behaviour are maintained across the College at all times and that any kind of bullying is not a feature of College life. It is the responsibility of all staff to ensure that the highest standards of behaviour are (a) expected and (b) maintained at all times to ensure a pleasant and harmonious learning environment where each student can grow and flourish academically, personally and spiritually and that they feel safe at all times as young adults whilst at St. Dominic's.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying involves the abuse of power. It is persistent and it is personal to the individual. Bullying is deliberately or thoughtlessly causing distress, either mental or physical, to others by hurting them with words or actions, or by making them feel embarrassed, excluded or threatened. Bystanders who fail to intervene are also, to a degree, responsible for bullying.

Bullying contravenes the Human Rights Act 1998, is totally at variance with the ethos of the College and will not be tolerated. Should a student or students be involved in bullying, it will be treated as one of the most serious infringements of College policy and be dealt with accordingly.

Bullying can take many forms but the main types are:

- Physical – hitting, kicking, taking another's belongings
- Verbal – name calling, insulting, making offensive remarks, threats
- Social/Non-Verbal – excluding, offensive gestures, unpleasant notes
- Emotional – personal comments, making one feel isolated/unhappy
- Online/cyber bullying
- Racial and homophobic bullying

These categories may be interrelated.

Implementing this policy

St. Dominic's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy clearly sets out our aim for all students: The Mission of the College is to ensure all students can develop academically within a safe learning environment, allowing them to grow as young men and women, personally and spiritually. Bullying clearly undermines this aim. The College will deal with bullying in a firm and effective way.

In implementing this policy, the College will:

- stop the bullying behaviour
- rebuild relationships
- develop appropriate social skills and attitudes in the victims, perpetrators and bystanders of bullying
- implement the Equality Act 2010 which aims to eliminate discrimination & harassment, foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not, and to advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. The protected characteristics specified are as follows: age (including children and young people), disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnerships
- to promote and reinforce at every opportunity the Christian ethos of care and respect for the individual.

The College sets out to achieve these aims by:

- listening to and taking notice of complaints or reports of bullying
- resolving incidents of bullying by reconciling and educating those involved
- punishing those responsible for bullying where this is an appropriate and effective response
- ensuring that all students (and parents) see that bullying is not tolerated.

Roles and responsibilities

Students who are being bullied are encouraged to tell a member of staff who will then follow up with the Director of Learning or a senior member of staff. Students will sometimes report a bullying incident to a friend in the first instance and the College encourages all students who have had something confided to them to report it immediately.

The College will do everything it can to put things right and to make sure there are no reprisals.

We are all responsible for our community and must act when we see its values undermined. There are no innocent bystanders in bullying and the College will expect students who witness or hear about bullying to report the matter.

Parents have a key role to play as well and the College would expect parents:

- to take what their children say to them seriously and to report concerns or suspicions of bullying to their son or daughter's Tutor
- to accept that the whole story may be quite complex with blurred recollections, circumstances and perceptions of what happened (in many cases bullying occurs between students who have recently been good friends)
- to trust the College to resolve matters according to the aims and methods stated in this policy; to seek information where they need it and to consider what the College has to say.

Parents who are not satisfied with the action that has been taken can refer the matter to a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

Procedures

The procedure which will be followed by the College when a complaint or report of bullying is received will be as follows:

- all complaints and reports will be referred by whom it is received to the appropriate Tutor. In many cases one-off incidents can be effectively resolved at this stage
- for patterns or serious incidents, the Directors of Learning or Assistant Principal will be informed. They will speak to each of the individuals concerned: victim, bully and bystanders; each will usually be asked to write an account of what happened
- the Directors of Learning or Assistant Principal, taking into account people and circumstances, will decide what action to take and what sanctions to impose
- the Tutor will check-up to make sure the victim is alright the following day and one week later (and more often if there is serious cause for concern). Counselling support will be offered if appropriate
- parents will be kept informed of progress and decisions taken. Parents seeking an interview will be seen at the earliest opportunity by the Assistant Principal
- a report will be kept in the student's file.

Advice to Students:

The following advice is given to students in their Student Workbooks during Induction and is reiterated and reinforced in tutorials and assemblies:

Bullying is deliberately or thoughtlessly causing distress to others by hurting them with your words or actions, or by making them feel embarrassed, excluded or threatened. Remember that what may seem a joke or a bit of harmless teasing to you and your friends may not be fun for the person on the receiving end. Bullying is extremely rare at St. Dominic's. However, if you do bully, you can expect strong action to be taken against you. People who stand by and do nothing while bullying is going on are, to an extent, also responsible for the bullying. If you see someone being bullied do something to stop it. If you feel confident intervene, if not report it.

If you are being bullied you must tell someone who has the power to do something about it - your parents, a teacher, your Tutor, a member of the Pastoral Team or the Chaplain. Sometimes victims think that reporting bullying will make things worse - this is not true. A report of bullying will be dealt with carefully and everything will be done to make sure that the bullying stops and that there are no repercussions for you. You have a right to feel safe and happy at College and to be treated with respect - don't let anyone else take away that right.

Persistent Bullying:

For students reasonably to be expected to report bullying (either of themselves or of others), they must be reassured that there will be no repercussions. Staff dealing with incidents will make quite clear to those responsible for the bullying that there must be no repercussions for others, either directly or indirectly; this may include an instruction that there is to be no further contact whatsoever with named students. Any instance of continued bullying or intimidation after an investigation and warning is likely to result in exclusion.

The College is likely to exclude permanently any student responsible for serious and persistent bullying.

The College's Zero Tolerance Policy towards violence, sexual harassment or drugs will result in permanent exclusion from St. Dominic's

Originator: Assistant Principal
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