

Anti-Bullying Policy

2010



**Ardscoil Rís,
North Circular Road,
Limerick**

**Ardscoil Rís is a Catholic School under the Trusteeship of
ERST**

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1. Mission Statement

Ardcoil Ris aims to promote the spiritual, personal, physical, cultural, aesthetic and academic development of its students. It aims to create a community where students are imbued with Christian values of respect, justice and integrity. We encourage students to become involved in a variety of activities outside the curriculum. Life skills are reinforced through participation in such activities as music, debating, quizzes, work experience programmes, enterprise, foreign exchange, drama, concerts, charitable fundraising and Gaisce

2. Rationale

- The school has a statutory obligation to ensure that an anti-bullying policy is in place that reflects the principles and values of the religious and educational philosophy of the school. (The Education Act, 1998; the Employment Equality Acts, 1998 and 2004; Circular M44/05: Child protection guidelines; Section 23 of the Education Act, 2000; Equal Status Acts, 2000 and 2004)
- The school seeks to provide the highest possible standard of education for all its pupils. A stable, secure learning environment is essential. Bullying behaviour undermines the quality of education. Therefore a strong anti-bullying policy is an integral part of the education philosophy of Ardcoil Ris.
- A clear and robust policy is necessary to identify and deal with bullying behaviour in a fair and equitable manner.
- This policy has been drawn up with due consideration to the DES documentation “Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour” 1993
- A positive school climate focuses on respect for the individual. It can also prevent and not just control bullying. The Ardcoil Ris ethos is inspired by the vision of Edmund Rice. Our school gives priority to education in a living faith whereby students grow to appreciate the life mission of Jesus Christ with a view to being committed to the world as he was; has a special concern for the poor and under-privileged; is challenged to develop a curriculum which promotes the harmonious growth of the whole person.

It is within the context of this school ethos that this policy has been produced.

3. Aims

- To create a school ethos which encourages students to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour
- To raise awareness of bullying as an unacceptable form of behaviour amongst school management, teachers, students and parents/guardians
- To create an ethos that acknowledges, accommodates and respects a diversity of students
- To develop procedures for reporting and recording incidents of bullying behaviour

- To develop procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour
- These procedures will have due regard to the school's Pastoral Care and Code of Behaviour policies

4. Definition of bullying

Bullying is repeated inappropriate behaviour, direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others, which could reasonably be regarded as undermining the individual's dignity. An isolated incident of the behaviour described in this definition may be an affront to dignity, but as a once off incident is not considered to be bullying. (Codes of Practice 2002 under the Industrial Relations Act and the Health and Safety at Work Act)

Cyber-bullying includes bullying through text messages, pictures or video clips via mobile phone cameras, phone calls, e-mail, chat-rooms, instant messaging or websites (blogs, personal websites, personal polling sites, or social networking sites). Cyber-bullying can happen when text messages/pictures/clips/pictures/e-mails/messages etc are sent to you, but also when text messages/pictures/clips/e-mails/messages etc are sent to others, about you.

The term bullying also encompasses harassment, which is defined as follows:

Any form of unwanted conduct in relation to any of the nine grounds named in the equality legislation, i.e. gender, marital status, family status, age, race, religion, sexual orientation and membership of the travelling community, that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment for the victim.

Harassment may include sexual harassment. Sexual harassment means unwanted conduct of a sexual nature or other conduct based on a person's sex which affects the dignity of men and women at work.

5. Anti-bullying Charter

- **We want Ardscoil Ris to be free from bullying behaviour**
- **There should be no name calling**
- **There should be no physical abuse**
- **There should be no "ganging up" on people**
- **All students, staff and visitors should be respected**
- **We all share responsibility that the property of each member of the school community is respected**
- **Issues regarding bullying should be shared with a parent, friend and/or the school community (e.g. a teacher, class tutor, counsellor)**
- **We all share responsibility that bullying behaviour is not tolerated**

6. Prevention of bullying:

The school will endeavour to prevent bullying in general by encouraging an open, proactive and positive relationship between staff and students. The following specific activities may also assist in preventing bullying:

- **Displaying the Anti-bullying Charter prominently throughout the school**
- **Raising awareness of bullying issues in the SPHE, RE and CSPE classes**
- **Frequent contact with individual students by the Principal, Deputy-Principal, Class Tutors and Year Heads to establish good personal relationships**
- **Teachers' presence on the yard and the corridors at break and lunch time. Such supervision can act as a deterrent of bullying activity**
- **The Pastoral Care Committee endeavours to identify students who may benefit from additional support and guidance and meets with these students**
- **The school Guidance Counsellors arranges individual meetings with all first year students. These meetings may assist in the prevention of bullying**
- **The school's Prefects, by their presence on the corridors during lunch time, may deter bullying behaviour and/or alert the school authorities to such behaviour**
- **All school personnel will be made aware of this Anti-bullying Policy**

7. Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying:

These will follow a two stage approach detailed below

Stage 1: Noting and Reporting

- **All incidents or suspicions of bullying should be brought to the attention of the Year-head, Class Tutor, Principal, Deputy-Principal, subject teacher or Guidance Counsellor**

- Any such incidents will be reported to the Principal , Deputy-Principal and Year-Head for investigation
- A written record of the incident will be filed. Such reports should be fact-based without opinion or conjecture (see appendix 1)
- Confidentiality will be observed. However, a duty of care obligation exists where others may need to be contacted
- Ancillary staff will be aware of the policy and will be encouraged to report any incidents which raise concern

Stage 2: Investigating and Dealing with an incident of bullying

- In an incident of alleged bullying the victim, perpetrator and witness will be interviewed as appropriate.
- All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all the pupils involved
- A written record of any interviews will be filed
- In cases where it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred it may be appropriate to meet with the parents/guardians of the two parties involved to explain the actions being taken and the reasons for them, and to refer them to school policy
- Depending on the outcome of these procedures pastoral strategies and/or disciplinary sanctions may be invoked

8. Sanctions

Sanctions will be imposed in line with the school Code of Behaviour

- Sanctions are part of a plan to change behaviour. A sanction is a form of positive intervention
- Parents or guardians of alleged victims and alleged bullies will be informed by the Principal or Deputy-Principal or Year-Head that an incident is being investigated. They are then in a position to help and support their children regarding the matter.

- **Parents may be invited to meet the Principal /Deputy-Principal/Year-Head where sanctions may be imposed.**
- **Sanctions may include:**
 - (a) Dialogue with students involved**
 - (b) Issuing a complaint slip**
 - (c) Detention**
 - (d) A formal warning**
 - (e) A contract of good behaviour**
 - (f) Withdrawal of privileges**
 - (g) School community service**
 - (h) Suspension**
 - (i) Exclusion**
 - (j) Others deemed appropriate**

9.Support for Victims and Perpetrators

In the context of the school's Mission Statement and ethos Ardscoil Ris will endeavour to provide support for the parties involved in the following ways:

- **Referral to counselling can provide a confidential forum for the victims and perpetrators to explore their feelings and experiences**
- **The Pastoral Care Committee can provide additional support for students who bully and who are bullied.**

INCIDENT REPORT FORM – TEACHER’S REPORT

Part One – To be filled in by the member of staff

Date and time that the incident was reported: _____

Student’s name and class: _____

Member of staff’s name: _____

Signature of reporting member of staff: _____

How you became aware of the incident:

What was reported to you? /What did you witness?

Were there any witnesses? List names:

Signed: _____

Date: _____

REPORT OF ALLEGED INCIDENT OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

Part One – To be filled in by the member of staff

Date and time that the incident was reported: _____

Student's name and class: _____

Member of staff's name: _____

Signature of reporting member of staff: _____

Part Two – To be filled in by the student

This is what happened: _____

All of the above is true to the best of my knowledge.

Signature of student: _____

Part Three – To be filled in by Principal/Deputy- Principal/Year head

Signature(s) of student's parent(s)/guardian(s) (if applicable): _____

Signature of school Principal/Deputy Principal/Year-Head: _____

BEHAVIOURAL CONTRACT DOCUMENT

Date and time of interview: _____

I, (insert student's name) _____ agree to keep the following codes of behaviour:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Signature of student: _____

I understand the consequences of not keeping to this agreement. These consequences are:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Signature of student: _____

I confirm that I shall attend a follow-up meeting to this interview. The purpose of the follow-up meeting will be to review my progress. At this time, if I have not kept to the agreement made at the interview, the consequences above will be applied. This meeting will be held on:

(insert time and date) _____

Signature of student: _____

This agreement was made in the presence of:

Signature of interviewing member of staff: _____

Signature(s) of student's parent(s)/guardian(s) (if applicable): _____

Signature of school Principal/Deputy Principal/Year-Head: _____