

# **Anti-Bullying Policy**



**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 Rís 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.

## **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 Rís.
- 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 *Action Plan on Bullying – Report of the Anti-Bullying Working Group to the Minister for Education and Skills* which was published in January 2013.
- A positive school climate focuses on respect for the individual. It can also prevent and not just control bullying. The Ardcoil Rís 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, all staff, students and parents/guardians

- To create an ethos that acknowledges, accommodates and respects a diversity of students
- To provide procedures for reporting and recording incidents of bullying behaviour
- To provide procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour
- To facilitate ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the school's anti bullying policy.
- 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 the following behaviours –

- Denigration: Spreading rumours, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation
- Harassment: Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual
- Impersonation: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name
- Flaming: Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight
- Trickery: Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online
- Outing: Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images
- Exclusion: Purposefully excluding someone from an online group
- Cyber stalking: Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety
- Silent telephone/mobile phone calls
- Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls
- Abusive text messages
- Abusive email
- Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles
- Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures
- Abusive posts on any form of communication technology

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.

The term bullying also encompasses any of the following discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation –

1. gender including transgender
2. civil status
3. family status
4. sexual orientation
5. religion
6. age
7. disability
8. race
9. membership of the Traveller Community

Any form of unwanted conduct in relation to any of the nine grounds as listed above, that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment for the victim is deemed to be bullying.

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 Rís 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
- All school staff, students, Student Council, Parent Council and Board of Management will be made aware of this Anti-bullying Policy
- The Student Council is encouraged to play an active leadership role in the prevention of bullying.

## **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 the parent/guardian of the parties involved will be contacted 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. Support and /or Sanction**

All actions taken will be in line with the school Code of Behaviour

- 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.
- 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 Rís 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. (Referral to NEPS, NBSS, child psychologist/Garda Juvenile Liaison Officer, contact with other support agencies.)
- The Pastoral Care Committee can provide additional support for students who bully and who are bullied.

**Approved BOM 10 September 2010**

**Reviewed BOM 14 May 2014.**

**Next Review 2016 or earlier if required**

**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:** \_\_\_\_\_