

Anti -Bullying Policy

As part of our attendance and participation guidelines

Revised September 2017

The Board of Management of North Connaught College is publishing this document as the official Anti-Bullying Policy. MSLETB as patron of the College has approved this publication. Copies of the policy are available at the College and to each person who is admitted to the College.

Scope of policy: *This policy applies to the whole college community in their relationships with each other- students, teachers, management, Board of Management, parents, office, residence and all ancillary staff.*

Rationale:

1. *Department of Education and Science requires Colleges to have a written anti-bullying policy.*
2. *The ETB/trustees have a statutory obligation to ensure that a policy is in place that reflects the principles and values of the educational philosophy of the College.*
3. *Involving and encouraging all members of the College community in developing, formulating and reviewing this policy on bullying promotes partnership, ownership and implementation of a living policy.*
4. *NCC considers bullying as a health and safety issue and a discipline issue and will address issues of bullying under each of these headings.*

Links to Mission Statement:

At North Connaught College students are encouraged to actively participate in a learning environment, where each individual is supported, respected as unique and where every effort is made to develop knowledge and skills appropriate to their needs.

Links to Ethos:

"We aim to inspire a Love of Learning in all our students, irrespective of ability, and through personable and enthusiastic encouragement to lead all on to develop as caring, respectful Individuals in a challenging world."

Objective:

"We aspire to fulfil this commitment by fostering an atmosphere of respect, understanding, and encouragement between all who teach, work and learn in the College, so that the development and contribution of every individual can be acknowledged, and all can work together to benefit personal growth and the common good."

Content of Policy

Definition: *Bullying consists of repeated inappropriate behaviour whether by word, by physical action or otherwise, directly or indirectly applied, by one or more persons against another person or persons which undermines the individual person's right to personal dignity.*

Notes:

- *This is not to be confused with the good-natured banter that goes on as part of the normal social interchange between students or the normal professional classroom management by teachers.*
- *Cyberbullying is bullying behaviour that occurs using electronic technology. The once-off occurrence of cyberbullying may well be seen as amounting to bullying behaviour.*

Types of behaviour deemed to be inappropriate:

- *Humiliation; including name-calling, reference to academic ability, physical appearance etc.*
- *Intimidation; including aggressive use of body language and threats, including demands for money.*
- *Verbal abuse, anonymous or otherwise.*
- *Physical abuse or threatened abuse.*
- *Aggressive or obscene language specifically directed at an individual or group.*
- *Offensive joke; whether spoken, photographic, or by email, text messaging, or other electronic means e.g. "social networking sites".*
- *Silent telephone/mobile phone calls*
- *Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls/text messages/e-mails/website messages.*
- *Victimisation; including very personal remarks.*
- *Exclusion and isolation.*
- *Intrusion through interfering with personal possessions.*
- *Repeated assignment to duties/projects that are obviously unreasonable..*
- *Repeated unreasonable deadlines or tasks.*
- *An attack by rumour, gossip, innuendo or ridicule on any individual's reputation.*
- *Persistent attempts to undermine the authority or knowledge of others through repeated questioning/commenting.*
- *Coercion of Sexual Favours*
- *Cyberbullying*
- *Homophobic bullying*

Statement on Bullying:

- *Every person in NCC is entitled to respect and to be free of any type of bullying.*
- *NCC will work proactively, as far as it can, to ensure that bullying does not take place.*
- *Reporting incidents of bullying is responsible behaviour.*
- *A record will be kept of all reported incidents of bullying.*
- *The matter will be dealt with seriously.*
- *NCC will offer support to those involved.*
- *Appropriate action will be taken to ensure that it does not continue.*

Indications of Bullying/Behaviour – Signs and Symptoms

- *Anxiety about travelling to and from College*
- *Unwillingness to go to College.*
- *Avoiding certain days or lessons.*
- *Uncharacteristic nervousness in class*
- *Punctuality problems.*
- *A reluctance to take part in previously enjoyed activities.*
- *Deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school.*
- *Unexplained changes in mood or behaviour; it may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or more specifically after longer College holidays.*
- *Visible signs of anxiety – stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, illness, absenteeism.*
- *Spontaneous out-of-character comments about either students or teachers.*
- *Possessions missing or damaged.*
- *Increased requests for money or stealing money.*
- *Unexplained bruising or damaged clothing.*
- *Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling him/her.*

Anti-Bullying Policy - Students:

Consultation with education partners through:

- *Discussion and agreement with students through Staff and the Student Forum.*
- *Input from staff as agreed at Staff Meetings and via individual emails.*

It is School policy to provide **education on bullying** in the following manner:

- *On enrolment/induction all students will be advised as to the nature and content of NCC anti-bullying policy.*

Support Structure/ Pastoral Care:

Chain of support: Student/ Teacher / Deputy Principal / Principal / Care Team/ Guidance Counsellor/ Student council / Board of Management.

Procedures for Noting and Reporting Incidents of Bullying:

- *Students should discuss any incident of bullying with a tutor or another trusted adult within the college system; **this is responsible behaviour rather than “telling tales”.***

Incidents of bullying behaviour, no matter how trivial, which are drawn to the attention of a staff member, fellow student or student council will be dealt with in the following manner:

- *Appropriate personnel (Principal/Deputy Principal) will interview all of the individuals involved in a bullying incident.*
 - *The alleged victim and alleged perpetrators of the incident will be spoken to and encouraged to solve the problem.*
 - *The alleged victim and perpetrators will be invited to write down any relevant details. Written statements from all involved in the incident will be noted.*
 - *All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all persons involved.*
 - *Records will be kept of all incidents and of the procedures that were followed.*
- *The Support Tutor(s) will be kept informed of all incidents and have access to relevant written records.*
- *Where the incident is deemed to be minor, a verbal warning will be given by an appropriate member of staff to the bully to stop the inappropriate behaviour, pointing out how he/she is in breach of the Attendance and Participation procedures, and college anti bullying policy and trying to get him/her to see the situation from the victim’s point of view. The incident will no longer be considered if there is no recurrence within that academic year.*
- *If the behaviour persists, management will be informed. Appropriate sanctions will be imposed. The incident will no longer be considered if there is no recurrence within that academic year.*
- *If there is a serious incident, the matter should be reported to the Deputy Principal or Principal*
- *Offenders and victims of bullying may be recommended to counselling.*
- *In the case of a complaint regarding a staff member, this should be referred immediately to the Principal.*
- *Where cases, relating to either student or teacher, remain unresolved at college level, the matter should be referred to the Board of Management.*
- *A student may appeal disciplinary decisions made by writing to the Principal within 10 days of receipt of written decision.*

Serial Bullying

If a person/persons persists in bullying despite correction, the following steps may be taken:

- 1. Arrangements will be made to advise and counsel all parties involved*
- 2. All parties will be required to discuss the matter.*
- 3. Suspension*

If bullying continues we must consider the right of others to a safe learning environment, free from harassment, it may not be possible to retain the person/persons who exhibited the bullying behaviour in the school.

Bullying by students

Student (and parent if under 18 years of age) will be informed of this, and may be asked for permission to refer the student to a psychologist from the Department of Education or the HSE. However he/she must understand the school's primary obligation is to protect the victims of bullying, and this may mean permanent exclusion for persistent bullying behaviour.

Bullying by teachers/staff

Issues arising will be referred to the Grievance Procedures.

Bullying of Teachers

The College will support teachers where they are subject to bullying by a student or colleague. NCC will work to ensure that a climate of respect is maintained at all times.

Roles and Responsibilities:

The college management team are responsible for ensuring that the policy is implemented.

Success Criteria:

Well-being and happiness of the whole college community.

Monitoring and implementation:

*Monitored and implemented by all members of staff
Include on agenda for teaching staff meetings at least once a year.*

Review and evaluation:

The College will monitor, review, and evaluate this Policy and all related work and procedures on an ongoing basis to ensure legal compliance and maintenance of best practices

Legislation/equality proofing:

- Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour, 1993.
- Circular M33/91: Guidelines towards a positive policy for school behaviour and discipline
- The Education Act, 1998
- The Education (Welfare) Act, 2000
- The Equal Status Acts, 2000 to 2004
- Equality Legislation In The Republic Of Ireland - The Employment Equality Act 1998
- Circular C45/2013: Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools

Approved by the Board of Management before being passed to MSLETB for approval.