

# Notre Dame Catholic College

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## Anti-Bullying Policy

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# *Opening Hearts, Minds and Doors*

## **Anti-Bullying**

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## Why do we have this Policy?

Our Vision Statement states that we are a Catholic community which recognises and respects the value of every individual “always having the highest expectations of ourselves and of our pupils, and providing a happy, safe, secure and well-disciplined environment in which our pupils can thrive.” Putting this into practice should ensure that all pupils receive an education free from bullying and harassment. The school is committed to using restorative practices, where appropriate.

Bullying is behaviour conducted by either one individual, or a group of individuals, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group either physically or emotionally, Physical, verbal, cyber or indirect abuse of others is unacceptable at Notre Dame Catholic College. It is the responsibility of everyone associated with the school to promote good relationships and prevent bullying. We wish to raise the self-esteem of everyone at the school and create an atmosphere of mutual respect, as outlined in our Vision Statement.

The following legislation sets out measures and actions for schools in response to bullying, as well as criminal and civil law.

The school complies with The Equality Act 2010. We will strive to ensure that all pupils are treated fairly and justly and that there is no bullying on the grounds of age, gender, race, religion or belief, colour, language, culture, social circumstances, appearance, sexuality, ability or disability etc.

### **Equality Act 2010**

[www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools)

### **Education and Inspection Act 2006, 2011**

[http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/pdfs/ukpga\\_20060040\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/pdfs/ukpga_20060040_en.pdf)

[http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/21/pdfs/ukpga\\_20110021\\_en.pdf](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2011/21/pdfs/ukpga_20110021_en.pdf)

### **Equality Act 2010**

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance>

### **Children’s Act 1989**

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41>

### **Protection from Harassment Act 1997**

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1997/40/contents>

### **Malicious Communication Act 1988**

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1988/27>

### **Public Order Act 1986**

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1986/64>

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However, if bullying is taking place, then our guideline is:

### LET SOMEONE KNOW

**Remember – SILENCE IS THE ALLY OF THE BULLY**

- **Definition**
  - For the purpose of this policy, “bullying” is defined as persistent behaviour by an individual or group with the intention of verbally, physically, or emotionally harming another person or group.
  - Bullying is generally characterised by:
- **Repetition:** Incidents are not one-offs; they are frequent and happen over a period of time.
- **Intent:** The perpetrator(s) means to cause verbal, physical or emotional harm; it is not accidental.
- **Targeting:** Bullying is generally targeted at a specific individual or group.
- **Power imbalance:** Whether real or perceived, bullying is generally based on unequal power relations.
  - Vulnerable pupils are more likely to be the targets of bullying due to the attitudes and behaviours some young people have towards those who are different from themselves.
  - Vulnerable pupils may include, but are not limited to:
    - Pupils with SEND.
    - Pupils who are adopted.
    - Pupils suffering from a health problem.
    - Pupils with caring responsibilities.
- Types of bullying
  - Many kinds of behaviour can be considered bullying and can be related to almost anything.
  - Teasing another pupil because of their appearance, religion, ethnicity, gender, sexual-orientation, home life, culture, disability, or SEND are some of the types of bullying that can occur.
  - Bullying is acted out through the following mediums:
    - Verbally
    - Physically
    - Emotionally
    - Online (Cyber)

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- **Racist bullying:** Bullying another person based on their ethnic background, religion or skin colour. Racist bullying is a criminal offence under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and Public Order Act 1986.
- **Homophobic bullying:** Bullying another person because of their actual or perceived sexual orientation.
- **Transphobic bullying:** Bullying based on another person's gender 'variance' or for not conforming to dominant gender roles.
- **Sexist bullying:** Bullying based on sexist attitudes expressed in a way to demean, intimidate or harm another person because of their sex or gender. Sexist bullying may sometimes be characterised by inappropriate sexual behaviours.
- **Sexual bullying:** Bullying behaviour that has a physical, psychological, verbal or non-verbal sexual dimension/dynamic that subordinates, humiliates or intimidates another person. This is commonly underpinned by sexist attitudes or gender stereotypes.
- **Prejudicial bullying:** Bullying based on prejudices directed towards specific characteristics, e.g. SEND or mental health issues.
- **Relational bullying:** Bullying that primarily constitutes of excluding, isolating and ostracising someone – usually through verbal and emotional bullying

**Although bullying itself is not a criminal offence, some types of harassment, threatening behaviour and / or communications may be considered criminal offences:**

- Under the Malicious Communications Act 1988, it is an offence for a person to electronically communicate with another person with the intent to cause distress or anxiety, or in a way which conveys a message which is indecent or grossly offensive, a threat, or contains information which is false and known or believed to be false by the sender.
- The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 makes it an offence to knowingly pursue any course of conduct amounting to harassment.
- Section 127 of the Communications Act 2003 makes it an offence to send, by means of a public electronic communications network, a message, or other matter, that is grossly offensive or of an indecent, obscene or menacing character. It is unlawful to disseminate defamatory information through any media, including internet sites.
- Other forms of bullying which are illegal and should be reported to the police include: violence or assault, theft, repeated harassment or intimidation and hate crimes.

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**Signs of Bullying:**

Staff will be alert to the following signs that may indicate a pupil is a victim of bullying:

- Being frightened to travel to or from school
  - Asking to be driven to school
  - Unwillingness to attend school
  - Truancy
  - Becoming anxious or lacking confidence
  - Saying that they feel ill in the morning
  - Decreased involvement in school work
  - Returning home with torn clothes or damaged possessions
  - Missing possessions
  - Missing dinner money
  - Asking for extra money or stealing
  - Cuts or bruises
  - Lack of appetite
  - Unwillingness to use the internet or mobile devices
  - Becoming agitated when receiving calls or text messages
  - Lack of eye contact
  - Becoming short tempered
  - Change in behaviour and attitude at home
    - Although the signs outlined above may not be due to bullying, they may be due to deeper social, emotional or mental health issues, so are still worth investigating.
    - Pupils who display a significant number of these signs are approached by a member of staff, to determine the underlying issues, whether they are due to bullying or other issues.
    - In addition, staff will be aware of the potential factors that may indicate a person is likely to have bullying behaviours, including, but not limited to, the following:
  - They have experienced mental health problems, which have led to the pupil becoming aggravated
  - They have been the victim of domestic abuse
  - Their academic performance has started to fall, which has meant they are stressed
- If staff become aware of any factors that could lead to bullying behaviours, they will notify the pupil's **form tutor**, who will investigate the matter and monitor the situation.

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## How does the School Respond?

- ❖ Accurate records are kept of all incidents involving bullying. Pupils are encouraged to report incidents. All teaching and non-teaching staff report any concerns about possible bullying to the appropriate Head of Year or Assistant Headteacher. All serious allegations and incidents are recorded on CPOMS. Statements will be taken from those involved and any witnesses with follow up information logged on the file.
- ❖ Staff are proactively encouraged to be sensitive about issues between individual or groups of pupils which may provoke conflict. Issues or concerns are reported to pastoral staff immediately.
- ❖ Incidents of bullying outside of the school premises will be investigated and acted upon by staff. The Headteacher will consider whether it is appropriate to notify the police or local authority of action taken against the pupil.
- ❖ Parents/carers may be contacted and records of meetings, contact or attempts to contact parents/carers will be kept on file.
- ❖ After finding out the facts about any bullying incident, the school can use a range of measures and sanctions available and consult with other agencies (e.g. police, bullybusters etc.), where necessary. The school's response to each case of bullying will obviously depend on the circumstances of each incident.
- ❖ All actions/decisions taken regarding bullying incident will be recorded
- ❖ Where there is 'reasonable cause to suspect a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm' a bullying incident or allegation will be addressed as a child protection concern. (Children's Act 1989). If this is the case staff will report the issue to the school safeguarding staff.
- ❖ The school makes expected standards clear to pupils and involves them in making decisions about rules and appropriate ways of behaving.
- ❖ Support, restorative justice and when necessary counselling, should be made available to those involved in bullying behaviour and parents are encouraged to support the work of the school.
- ❖ Disciplinary measures will be applied fairly, sensitively, and reasonably taking into account any special needs, disabilities that the pupils may have and taking into account the needs of vulnerable pupils.
- ❖ Provide staff training to ensure that all staff understand the principles and purpose of the school policy and its legal responsibilities towards bullying, how to resolve issues and where to seek support.
- ❖ Create an inclusive environment where all pupils feel safe without fear of bullying or discrimination.
- ❖ Teachers should feel that dealing with these issues is a learning experience and that there is no single way of dealing with incidents.
- ❖ A Statement of Commitment to eradicate bullying is signed by pupil/parent/carers and school representative at interview prior to starting at Notre Dame Catholic College in order to emphasise the school's determination to eradicate bullying and related anti-social behaviour.
- ❖ School behaviour policy is reinforced annually with pupils and parents.
- ❖ The PSHCE Programme and a number of curriculum areas seek to educate pupils in behaviour patterns which promote positive social interaction and help on resolving difficult situations without using violence and aggression.
- ❖ Make it easy for pupils to report bullying so that they feel assured they will be listened to and any incidents acted upon.

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- ❖ The victim of the incidents of bullying should be given priority. A balance must be struck between supporting and protecting the pupils involved. Intervention strategies should, where possible, empower the recipients.
- ❖ Pupils who feel that they are being bullied will be monitored very carefully by Form Tutors and strategies to deal with anyone felt to be responsible for bullying will be discussed with pupils and parents. Full cooperation of parents/carers is always sought.
- ❖ The school will support any pupil who is being bullied. Appropriate provision will be arranged depending on the individual circumstances and level of need.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation?**

- ❖ This policy will be monitored annually taking into account the views of pupils, staff and where possible, parents/carers.
- ❖ The records of incidents of bullying will be analysed to identify any patterns or trends and appropriate interventions developed when these exist.
- ❖ This policy will be evaluated and updated to take account of technological developments.

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