

Wesley College, Dublin

Anti-Bullying Policy

1 Definition

Bullying is repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another.

Intimidating behaviour, whether intended or otherwise, whether repeated or an isolated event, is always unacceptable in Wesley College.

Unkind actions or remarks are unacceptable even if these are not intended to hurt.

Bullying and intimidating behaviour includes:

- Physical contact which intimidates or harms another person
- Damage to or interference with another person's work or property
- Extortion
- Verbal aggression
- Unwanted comments, name-calling, graffiti or "slagging"
- Unwelcome telephone calls, text messages or emails
- The use of the internet or electronic technology to intimidate or comment unfavourably upon another person
- Spreading rumours
- Deliberate exclusion or isolation

2 General Statement

Every student has the right to enjoy learning and leisure time in school. Teachers are entitled to teach and students are entitled to learn free from any intimidation.

Bullying has detrimental effects, the most serious of which are fear, anxiety, loss of confidence and depression. Students learning in a climate of fear and resentment do not reach their full potential. Bullying may lead to incidents of self-harm and/or even suicide.

Bullies rely on silence. It is important that bullying behaviour be reported at all times. Wesley College is a “telling” school and it is essential that anyone who becomes aware of or suspects that intimidating behaviour is taking place should inform an appropriate person.

3 The College Ethos for Students

The College ethos for students emphasizes that students always demonstrate politeness, courtesy, co-operation and respect for others and their property as fundamental principles of behaviour.

This is stated in unambiguous terms in the Code of Behaviour. All parents/guardians are sent a copy of this Code to be signed and accepted by pupils and parents as a condition of entry to the College.¹

The school communicates this ethos by:

- Teachers and staff being committed to creating an atmosphere in the College in which bullying is not acceptable
- Dealing with the issue of bullying in subject areas such as: SPHE, CSPE, Religious Education and PE
- Regularly making reference, at Morning Assembly, to the rights of all at school to feel secure and comfortable in the College
- Highlighting the issue of appropriate behaviour towards others, during an annual Bullying Awareness Week and on other occasions during the academic year.
- Publishing and displaying Anti-Bullying information throughout the College
- Enhancing the self-esteem of pupils through Assembly, extra-curricular activities and in the classroom where this is possible

¹ Reference should be made to the College Code of Behaviour, copies of which are available in the College Office

4 Role of Parents

Parents have a vital role to play in supporting the college in implementing its anti-bullying procedures. They are strongly encouraged to contact the school if they believe their son/daughter is being subjected to bullying behaviour and to keep a record of such incidents.

The following behaviour **may** suggest that a pupil is being bullied: losing interest or enthusiasm for school, anxiety about travelling to or from school, unexplained mood changes possibly before school restarts, frequent minor illnesses, disturbed sleep, unexplained damage to property, unexplained cuts or bruises.

Where a parent knows or suspects that their own child is involved in bullying it is essential that they give their full support to the College in helping to solve the problem.

5 Procedures should bullying occur in the school

Every case of alleged bullying is individual and often complex. It is the intention of the College that every case is dealt with fairly.

All reports of bullying should be made to a member of staff e.g. the Class Tutor, relevant Year Head, or any teacher whom a pupil or parent feels comfortable in approaching.

The investigation will be overseen by the Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal.

Both the injured party and those allegedly involved will be interviewed. Each may be asked for a written account of the details of the incident(s) under investigation. Parents may be contacted at any stage of the investigation, as judged necessary.

The Chaplain/ Guidance Department may be involved in the case. Relevant information will be shared with staff.

In cases where bullying has been determined the perpetrator(s) will be informed that his/her/their behaviour is unacceptable and viewed as a serious breach of the Code of Behaviour.

Following final investigations and consideration, sanctions will be imposed. Students may be required to reaffirm in writing their

commitment to the College Code of Behaviour and acceptance of this Anti-Bullying Code.

Counselling will be offered to both the perpetrator(s) and injured party as judged necessary and following discussion with the parents/guardian involved. ²

6 Persistent or Serious Bullying

When the Principal/Deputy Principal deems that serious or persistent bullying/intimidation has occurred parents/guardians will be invited to an interview with the Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal. In particular, attention may be drawn to the section on sanctions in the Code of Behaviour. Note should be taken of points 6 and 7 under sanctions which state:

6. *...Suspension...may be imposed where the Principal is satisfied that this is warranted by serious offences such as bullying, theft, damage to persons or property or where a pupil has failed to respond to other forms of sanction for repeated misbehaviour.*
7. *The Board of Management reserves the right to remove from the school register any student who puts the health and welfare of other students or staff at risk, or any student who engages in persistent or serious misbehaviour which undermines the ethos of the school, undermines the education of other students or the work of the school staff.*

Wesley College is committed to meeting its obligation to protect all the students in its care from intimidating or bullying behaviour.

Revised and Approved by the Board of Management
November 2009

² Refer also to the School Guidance Policy.