

Anti-Bullying Policy

(Please note that the original policy was written in Irish. This version is to facilitate parents who do not speak Irish)

Introduction

Coláiste na bhFiann recognises that the world we live in today poses many challenges to our health and our well-being. Therefore, it is important that the organisation has a policy to deal with bullying. This policy was written and compiled over regular management meetings of Coláiste na bhFiann during 2004-2005.

The relationship of the policy with the Organisation's ethos

The organisation strives to help everyone reach his or her full potential in an environment which cares for him / her. Bullying behaviour does not align with this ethos as it undermines standards of education and has a negative impact on victims.

Aims and Objectives

- To reinforce the message with staff that bullying behavior is unacceptable. Included in this are College Managers, Teachers, Ardchinnirí, Cinnirí, the non-teaching staff, students and parents / guardians.
- To reinforce the organisations' ethos that encourages college students to discuss and expose bullying.
- To create a positive atmosphere focused on respect for the individual.
- To provide comprehensive monitoring systems along with implementation procedures to monitor all the activities of the college.
- To develop procedures for investigating incidents of bullying behaviour and to deal with them fully. All bullying incidents will be investigated fully.
- To provide appropriate support for those affected by bullying and for those involved.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the college's policy and review it regularly.

What is bullying?

Ongoing psychological or physical aggression or verbal speech by an individual or group against others.

Types of Bullying

- Physical assault - pushing, punching, kicking, prodding, taking a foot to another etc.
- Damage to property - construction, stealing, tearing, hiding objects, breaking, graffiti etc.
- Extortion - demands for money, clothes, jewellery, make-up on "loan" from each other.
- Intimidation - words or "glances" that express aggression.
- Isolation - isolating one / a group of people deliberately.
- Derogatory nicknames - names that hurt or humiliate students.
- Ridicule - when joking goes overboard with personal statements repeatedly for one person.
- Bullying of college personnel - Bullying of the college staff through physical assault, damage to property, verbal taunting, threatening the families etc.

- Staff behaviour - Manager, Teacher, Ardchinnire, Leader, other staff adding to bullying through sarcasm or humiliation, or any other expression that would be threatening or embarrassing.

Results of Bullying

Among the students involved, there is a lack of trust, intense anxiety, vulnerability, change in mood and behaviour, and damage to self-confidence and self-esteem. There is a need therefore for wise and understating prevention and to be vigilant about changes in behaviour.

The signs that suggest that bullying is evident

- Concerns about going to classes / swimming pool / dormitory etc. Unwillingness or refusing to participate.
- The quality of classwork slipping, reduction of diligence and care, and loss of interest in the course.
- Display of physical illnesses (eg headaches or stomach ache).
- Unexplained changes in mood or behaviour; these are noticed immediately prior to an event that the child associates with bullying.
- Visible signs of concern or annoyance - stammering, recession, nightmares, difficulty sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, bedwetting; eager to depart from the course, or move house.
- Voluntarily speaking about a student or teacher in an unusual way.
- Personal possessions missing or damaged.
- Request for money or stealing money, clothes, jewellery, etc.
- Unexplained cuts or damaged clothing.
- Unwillingness and / or refusal to say what is upsetting him / her.
- Student looking for constant attention.

A display of these signs by themselves are not necessarily a sign that bullying behaviour is present. Many of the above may be present in the case of homesickness. If any these signs are happening frequently or many at the same time, an investigation should take place to find out what is bothering the student.

Characteristics of Bullying Behaviour

Staff must fully recognise that any student can feel bullied or can be the origin of bullying behaviour. While we do not accept any bullying behaviour, it is important to recognise that the bully, as well as the victims, need guidance and advice.

The Victim - Anyone can suffer due to bullying.

The Bully - it is important to note that a lack of confidence and low self-esteem can affect a bully. A bully has often been bullied themselves. A bully likes attention. Bullying is often a sign a child seeking help.

Where does bullying occur?

Bullying occurs often and anywhere. It can happen anywhere in the college eg. The dormitories, the showers, the bathrooms, the classrooms, the playground, in the houses, on the bus, in the swimming pool, on the road, in the dressing rooms, on the corridors and in the hall. It is vital that students are supervised at all times.

Procedures for investigating bullying behaviour and how best to deal with it.

- Every effort is made to prevent bullying by keeping a close eye on the behaviour of all in the college and mediating accordingly.
- All reports / incidents of bullying must be investigated fully and be dealt with appropriately. Students will be encouraged to expose incidents of bullying.
- The Manager will be informed of all incidents of bullying immediately. All incidents of bullying are recorded in a written report and are held in headquarters after the course.
- A written record of the discussion is kept with Teachers / Manager with all those involved.
- In cases where bullying is evident, the Manager will immediately contact the Chairperson or a designated person (s) place. Personal judgments should not be made.
- On the advice of the Chairperson, contact will be made with the parents of the two sides as soon as possible.
- Proper care will be given to the bully and to the victim.

Ways to prevent Bullying Behavior

- Creation of an atmosphere that encourages respect on the courses.
- The cinnirí, the Ardchinnirí, Teachers etc. must always show a good example.
- A firm and clear system of discipline will always be applied.
- Self-esteem will be fostered in students.
- The college will create an atmosphere that all those on the course have a duty to himself / herself, no matter what their rank, to report any inappropriate behaviour.

Successful practices

- The development of practical workshops that focus on developing communication skills. Various methods such as drama, art and crafts, music, debate and discussions, and videos will be used to develop these skills.
- The encouragement of the use of positive feedback from Teachers, Cinnirí, Ardchinnirí, Parents and students.

Roles and Responsibilities

- The Chairperson and the team on the course co-ordinate and monitor the implementation of the anti-bullying policy.
- The policy will come into force in the summer of 2005.
- The policy and it's function will be reviewed after the summer, at the end of summer management meeting.
- The Board of Directors ratified the policy officially on 25 April 2007.