



ALEXANDRA COLLEGE

DUBLIN

Anti-Bullying Policy

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of Alexandra College has adopted this anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall Code of Behaviour. This policy complies fully with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* published by the Department of Education and Skills.

1. Purpose and Relationship to the Characteristic Spirit of Alexandra College

The purpose of this policy is to guide the whole school community in providing and maintaining a safe place to learn in accordance with our mission and our values; to raise awareness that bullying is unacceptable in our school community; to provide procedures for investigating, noting and dealing with bullying behaviour; and to develop a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour.

Our Mission

We are committed to creating and maintaining an inclusive learning environment in which every girl is enabled to know her worth, see the worth of others, and to live each school day well, for her good and for the common good.

It is our hope that every student leaves this College equipped to continue her lifelong learning process joyfully, to carve her own path, to make and sustain relationships, and to make her particular positive contribution to society.

Achievement of our mission requires the full support, engagement and day to day commitment of the whole school community.

Our Educational Philosophy

We believe that:

- learning is questioning, exploring, understanding and sharing
- learning is a challenging and enjoyable lifelong process
- teaching should stimulate, encourage and excite the students
- students benefit from a safe environment in which they can stretch, experiment and discover their potential

We reflect consistently on how we educate and learn so that we facilitate and inspire engaged learners and citizens.

Our Values

Our core values are a daily commitment to a way of being in the world. Together, they provide a framework to help us to think clearly, behave positively, reach sound decisions, be well, and contribute to the development and wellness of others.

We are committed to:

Independent Thinking: We teach our students to know themselves; how to think freely, critically and purposefully; to reason respectfully.

Respect: We respect ourselves, each other and our environment. We acknowledge the perspective, development and contribution of every individual and work together to benefit personal growth and the common good. We create an atmosphere and community of respect, understanding, non-judgmental challenge and encouragement.

Responsibility: We are responsible for ourselves and to society. We encourage our students to create and to take leadership opportunities, to act purposefully with conscience.

Diversity: We value the identity, heritage and culture of every student. We acknowledge and celebrate interconnectivity and the value and challenge of difference.

2. **Scope:** This policy applies to all students in Alexandra College.
3. The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of students. The Board of Management is fully committed to our mission and values and to these key principles of best practice to prevent and deal with bullying behaviour:
 - Promote a positive school culture and climate which:
 - is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
 - promotes mutually respectful relationships across the school community;
 - and
 - encourages students to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a safe, non-threatening environment;
 - Develop a school-wide approach and a shared understanding across the whole school community of what bullying is and of its impact;

- Support effective leadership;
- Implement education and prevention strategies and awareness raising measures that:
 - build empathy, respect, responsibility and resilience in students;
 - provide effective supervision and monitoring of students;
 - provide supports for staff;
- Consistently record, investigate and follow up alleged bullying behaviour; and
- Evaluate the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy regularly.

4. **Definition:** The 2013 guidelines on *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* define bullying as:

Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

There are many different forms of bullying. No list is exhaustive. The Department of Education and Skills has outlined some examples of the types of behaviour included in the definition of bullying:

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip, spreading rumours and other forms of relational bullying;
- cyber-bullying;
- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller Community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs;
- physical aggression;
- intimidation including hostile silence, body language which conveys aggression and/or dislike, and using the voice as a weapon;
- persistent name calling which hurts, insults or humiliates;
- damage to property;
- extortion;
- 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, shared and/or repeated by other people.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful private message which cannot be shared other than by the recipient, do not fall within the definition of bullying and will be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour and disciplinary procedure.

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

5. **Prevention of Harassment**

Harassment is any form of unwanted conduct related to any of the nine grounds specified: gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community. The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment or the harassment of students or staff.

6. **Education & Prevention Strategies**

The College will use these strategies to raise awareness; develop a shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact; and prevent bullying and harassment.

- All members of the school community will explicitly model what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like, and feels like in class, around and beyond the school.

With Students:

- In SPHE and tutorial class discuss:
 - i. demonstrate and celebrate how Alex Values can be lived day to day to create a safe, inclusive, positive school culture;
 - ii. discuss what bullying is, its indicators and impact;
 - iii. discuss triggers of behaviour and/or language which is othering, discriminatory, derogatory, belittling;
 - iv. discuss cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying and its impact.
- At assembly:
 - i. address students on bullying, its intended or unintended impact and each student's responsibility to create and maintain a safe place to learn for themselves and for others
 - ii. encourage students to present assemblies on prevention of bullying and creation of a safe place to learn.
- Use drama, role play, music and team sport to teach empathy, camaraderie and assertiveness.
- Highlight, bring notice to and praise behaviour that demonstrates respect for other members of the school community in ordinary everyday interactions.
- Display models and messages of respect in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve students in the design of these messages.
- Bring students' attention to behaviour and/or language which is intentionally or unintentionally othering, discriminatory, derogatory or belittling. Explicitly explain that bullying is a serious issue which will not be tolerated and it cannot be explained as "joking" or "being funny".

- Ask students to help staff identify triggers, “hot spots” and “hot times” for bullying in the school, if any.
- Explicitly teach students about the appropriate and responsible use of social media. Display our e-Learning rules publicly in relevant areas of the College.
- Focus on positive digital citizenship in all classes where iPads are used and in e-Learning classes in particular.
- Advise that the history of sites visited on school ICT equipment can be monitored by the school and perpetrators of bullying can be identified.
- Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in student friendly language in the classroom and in common areas. Positively encourage students to comply with the school rules. Follow up and follow through with students who ignore the rules.
- Support the engagement of the Student Council.
- Encourage students to tell their parents, teachers or a trusted adult if they are concerned about either themselves or someone else experiencing bullying.

With Parents:

- Actively involve ACA in awareness raising campaigns.
- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school and the responsibility of every member of the school community to respect the rights and freedoms of others.
- Promote attendance at Parents’ Evenings where the topic of bullying/cyber bullying is being addressed.
- Provide information to parents advising of strategies and websites that deal with the matter and recommend reading to promote knowledge and strategies for dealing with bullying.

With Staff:

- Foster a culture of open communication among students and teachers where concerns can be addressed.
- Provide inservice training for staff to promote intervention strategies and to review and revise our policy and approach.
- All staff will consistently:
 - i. “Catch students being good”, notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention;
 - ii. tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school - this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of students with a disability or SEN.

7. How Alexandra College will Investigate, Record and Deal With Alleged Bullying

- The focus of our procedures for investigation, recording and dealing with alleged or suspected bullying is to resolve issues and in so far as practicable to resolve the relationships of the relevant students.
- The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying are in ascending order:
 - Form Tutors
 - Year Heads
 - Deputy Principal
 - Principal
- Any staff member who observes or is told about an incident of alleged or suspected bullying will inform the Form Tutor of the student(s) concerned.
- Any student who observes or is involved in an incident of alleged or suspected bullying will inform the Form Tutor of the student(s) concerned or a parent or another member of the school staff who will inform the relevant Form Tutor, Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal as appropriate. The school will thank the student and let the student know that the matter is being dealt with.

Step 1:

- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. The relevant teacher will investigate the incident with respect for the privacy of all.
- The relevant teacher has discretion to take steps to resolve the incident smoothly and quickly. It is acknowledged that no one intervention works in all situations.

Step 2:

- If the incident has not been adequately resolved within 20 days, the Form Tutor will complete and return to the Principal the Template for recording alleged bullying behaviour at Appendix A.
- The Form Tutor, Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal as the Principal deems appropriate will investigate the incident with respect for the privacy of all.
- If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first. A group meeting may then be held at which each member will be asked for her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements;
- Each member of a group will be supported through the possible pressures that they may face them from the other members of the group;
- Those involved may be asked to write down their account of the incident(s);
- If the relevant teacher determines that bullying has occurred, the parents of the parties involved will be informed and the actions being taken explained by reference to the school policy. Parents and students are required to co-operate

with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible;

- The school will give parents an opportunity to discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school.

Step 3:

- If the relevant teacher has determined that a student has been engaged in bullying behaviour, the student will be told that she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy.
- The teacher will explain the situation from the perspective of the student being bullied.

8. Disciplinary Action

- The school at its discretion will impose appropriate sanctions up to and including exclusion in accordance with the College's Code of Behaviour.
- Any disciplinary sanctions are a private matter between the student being disciplined, her parents and the school.

9. Follow Up and Support

- The confidentiality of the students involved will be respected.
- The school will provide resources, support and strategies for dealing with bullying to the parents and students involved.
- The school will agree with parents supports for helping a student who is or has been bullied to build her sense of self-worth and assertiveness.
- The school will facilitate in so far as practicable a physical distance between students involved in bullying or with a tendency to be so involved.
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties may be arranged separately with a view to bringing them together at a later date if the student who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.
- The relevant teacher will regularly review progress made.
- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher will take into account:
 - i. whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
 - ii. whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
 - iii. whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable; and
 - iv. any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal.

- The school will keep notes of all interactions with the relevant students and parents.
10. Negative behaviour that does not meet the definition of bullying will be dealt with as appropriate in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.
 11. Once in every school term, the Principal will provide a report to the Board of Management setting out the overall number of bullying incidents reported by means of the template in Appendix 1 and confirmation that all of these cases have been, or are being, dealt with in accordance with these procedures.

12. Supervision and Monitoring of Students

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

13. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 11 February 2020.
14. This policy will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and to the School Council patron if requested.
15. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the ACA. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the Council and the Department of Education and Skills.

Appendix A

Template for Recording Alleged Bullying Behaviour

1. Name and class group of student allegedly being bullied

Name _____ Class _____

2. Name(s) and class(es) of student(s) engaged in alleged bullying behaviour

3. Source of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es))*

Student concerned	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Student	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))*

Dining Hall	<input type="checkbox"/>
Classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>

Corridor	
Toilets or Changing Rooms	
School Grounds or Playing Fields	
Other	

5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern

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6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) *

Physical Aggression		Cyber -Bullying	
Damage to Property		Intimidation	
Isolation/Exclusion		Malicious Gossip	
Name Calling		Other (specify)	

7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

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9. Details of actions taken

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Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date _____

Date submitted to Principal _____

Checklist for Annual Review of the Anti-Bullying Policy and its Implementation

The Board of Management will undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation. The following checklist will be used for this purpose. The checklist is an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. In order to complete the checklist, an examination and review involving both quantitative and qualitative analysis, as appropriate across the various elements of the implementation of the school's anti-bullying policy will be required.

	YES/NO
Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools</i> ?	
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association (ACA)?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff, including to new staff?	
Is the Board satisfied that school staff are sufficiently familiar with the policy and procedures to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy and procedures in their day-to-day work?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all students?	
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	

Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	
Has the Board discussed how well the school is handling all reports of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and not therefore included in the Principal's periodic report to the Board?	
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	
Has the data available from cases reported to the Principal (by the bullying recording template) been analysed to identify any issues, trends or patterns in bullying behaviour?	
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	

Signed _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date _____

Signed _____
Principal

Date _____

Appendix C

**Notification Regarding the Board of Management's
Annual Review of the Anti-Bullying Policy**

To: _____

The Board of Management of Alexandra College wishes to inform you that:

- A. The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of _____ [date].
- B. This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in **Appendix B**.

Signed _____ Date _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _____ Date _____
Principal