

Rice College Anti-Bullying Policy

Foreword

LAOS 2016, Domain 1: Leading Learning and Teaching states that “highly effective practice” occurs with the establishment of “clear principles of inclusion and social justice to deliver equality of opportunity for students throughout all aspects of school life. They do so in collaboration with all staff.”

Students are entitled to receive their education free from humiliation, oppression and abuse. Bullying affects everyone not just the victims and bullies. It also affects students who may witness violence, intimidation and the distress of the victim. It can damage the atmosphere of a class and the climate of the College.

The **Wellbeing Principle for Junior Cycle Education** promotes students being **Responsible, Connected, Respected and Resilient**. It is the aim of this policy to ensure that these descriptors are relevant to all students in Rice College.

The staff of Rice College acknowledge the **Children First Act, 2015**, and Circular 0081/2017 from The Department of Education and Science, and strive to deal with all matters of child protection "sensitively and professionally", and in accordance with the **Child Safeguarding Statement**. The requirements of this statement have been met-all staff have completed **Children First Training** courses facilitated by Tusla and the PDST.

The Designated Liaison Person is Mr. Louis Mulqueen (Principal)..

The Deputy Designated Liaison Person is Mr. John Burns (Deputy Principal).

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is repeated aggression conducted by an individual or group against others. There are three main parameters of bullying:

- (1) it is repetitive (prolonged over time);
- (2) it involves an imbalance of power;
- (3) it may be verbal, physical or psychological.

Aims of Anti-Bullying Policy

- (1) To provide a safe, secure learning environment for our pupils.
- (2) To create a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour and thus create a supportive climate which helps to break down the code of secrecy.
- (3) To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teachers, pupils, parents/guardians.
- (4) To develop procedures for noting and reporting incidents of bullying behaviour.
- (5) To develop procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.
- (6) To provide support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour.

Reporting

Complaints of bullying may be submitted by the victim, other students (witnesses or confidantes), teachers, ancillary staff, parents or members of the wider community. Complaints of bullying must be reported to either the Principal, Deputy Principal, or the Year Head, to determine the procedure to be followed.

Investigation

The Principal, Deputy Principal, or the Year Head will ensure that complaints of bullying are investigated and recorded.

Procedures

There are two procedures available for dealing with complaints of bullying:

- (1) The *Anti-Bullying Code*.
- (2) The *Code of Discipline*.

The Principal or Deputy Principal will determine which procedure is to be invoked (both procedures may be invoked).

Anti-Bullying Code

'No blame approach' / Restorative Justice

Member(s) of the Pastoral Care Team will conduct interviews with the victim and offender(s) according to the procedure outlined below:

Step 1: *interview with the victim.* The teacher starts by talking to the victim about his/her feelings.

Step 2: *convene a meeting with the people involved.* The teacher arranges to meet with the student(s) involved.

Step 3: *explain the problem.* The teacher tells them about the way the victim is feeling. At no one time does he/she allocate blame to the student(s).

Step 4: *share responsibility.* The teacher does not attribute the blame but states that he/she knows that the student(s) are responsible and can do something about it. Each member of the group is encouraged to suggest a way in which the victim could be helped to feel happier.

Step 5: *leave it up to them.* The teacher ends the meeting by passing over the responsibility to the student(s) to solve the problem. The teacher arranges to meet them again to see how things are going.

Step 6: *meet them again.* About a week later the teacher discusses with each student, including the victim, how things have been going. This allows the teacher to monitor the bullying and keeps the young people involved in the process.

Documentation & Communication

Reports of all investigations will be compiled in the strictest and in accordance with Data Protection 2018 Guidelines.

- the name of the victim and details of the meeting between the interviewing teacher and the victim. (*Step 1*)
- the name(s) of the offender(s) and details of the meeting between the interviewing teacher and the offender(s). (*Step 2*)
- Parents of the victim and the offender(s) may be notified on completion of the interview process. (*Step 6*)

Appendix

Indications of Bullying/Behaviour – Signs and Symptoms

The following signs/symptoms may suggest that a pupil is being bullied:

- anxiety about travelling to and from school – requesting parents to drive or collect them, changing route of travel, avoiding regular times for travelling to and from school;
- unwillingness to go to school, refusal to attend, mitching;
- deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school;
- pattern of physical illnesses (e.g. headaches, stomach aches);
- unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour; it may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or more especially after longer school holidays;
- visible signs of anxiety or distress – stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, bedwetting;
- spontaneous out-of-character comments about either pupils or teachers;
- possessions missing or damaged;
- increased requests for money or stealing money;
- unexplained bruising or cuts or damaged clothing;
- reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling him/her.

Those signs do not necessarily mean that a pupil is being bullied. If repeated or occurring in combination those signs do warrant investigation in order to establish what is affecting the pupil.

(These procedures may be subject to change in 2018/2019 as Rice College is participating in the NEPS initiative for Student Support Teams.)
(For more specific details on Cyber Bullying please refer to the Rice College Cyber Bullying Policy.)

All matters arising from allegations of, and investigations into, matters of bullying will be dealt with in the strictest confidence, in compliance with GDPR 2018. All paperwork will be securely stored by the Principal.

Reviewed by Subcommittee: 7/11/18

Reviewed by Staff: 22/11/18

Reviewed by Parents Association: 3/12/18

Reviewed by Student Council: 18/12/18

Ratified by BOM: