

# Anti- Bullying Policy 2014

## Ratoath College

*This policy has been drawn up by the students and teachers and parents of Ratoath College*

### **Definition:**

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

### **Ratoath College Bullying Statement:**

We want Ratoath College to be a bully-free school where all of us feel safe and happy. Therefore at Ratoath College we are fully committed to the key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour. We support a positive school culture and climate which:

- Is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
- Encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment;
- Promotes respectful relationships across the school community

### **What are the effects of Bullying on young people?**

- Fear
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Reduced Self esteem
- Feeling of isolation
- Lack of concentration on school work
- Reluctance to go to school
- Negative attitudes/Difficult/Argumentative
- Bruises, Cuts, Sprains, scratches or torn clothes
- Damage to or loss of property
- Suicidal thoughts and self-harm.

### **Bullying Behaviours which are not acceptable in Ratoath College:**

*(This is not an exhaustive list of behaviours, as all incidents will be dealt with on a case by case basis.)*

- **Physical:** Pushing others, tripping up others and fighting
- **Verbal:** Slagging, jeering, and talking about others behind their backs name-calling, threats , demanding money, sarcasm..

- **Psychological:** Giving the “Look”, staring at others, isolating others, deliberately excluding others.
- **Sexual Bullying:** Sexual comments, unwelcome touching of others, making nasty comments about someone being gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender. Homophobic bullying will not be tolerated.
- **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 educational special needs.
- **Racist Bullying:** Commenting on others accent, race, ethnicity or colour. Racial jokes.
- **Relational Bullying:**  
Spreading rumours and lies about a student  
Rallying friends against one person
- **E- Bullying**  
Threatening text messages  
Internet Bullying  
Placing any offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum (even if it is once off) where the message, image or statement can be viewed or repeated by others, will be regarded as bullying behaviour.
- **What can students do to prevent Bullying?**  
  
Notify a teacher/parent if they notice anybody being bullied/repeatedly mistreated.  
Do not give an audience to the bully  
Discourage others from bullying behaviour  
Give support to person being bullied.

## **What can parents do to help their children cope with bullying?**

- It is not advisable to advocate hitting back
- Teach them some coping strategies
  - Walk Tall
  - Walk away
  - Teach your child to appear confident
  - Encourage them to tell
  - Stay with friends-avoid bullies
  - Avoid provoking a bully
  - Take reasonable care of their belongings
  - Encourage assertiveness not aggression
  - Save any abusive mobile phone message and report it to the Gardaí

For further advice please read an excellent publication for parents:

***“Bullying in Secondary Schools”: What parents need to know.***

Also the following book is an excellent resource for your son/daughter “

***“R U B n Bullied: Tips for Teens”***

Available from the Cool Schools Programme: HSE. Phone: 041- 907935

### **What can Ratoath College do to prevent bullying?**

- Have an effective anti-bullying policy
- Regular Anti-Bullying confidential questionnaires
- Highlight the issue of bullying in CSPE, SPHE and RE classes and in assemblies.
- Hold an anti-bullying week
- Provide adequate supervision at break times.
- Provide In-service for teachers through the “Cool School “ programme
- Set up an Anti-Bullying Committee from among the staff
- Promote respect for fellow pupils
- Prevention of Harassment: 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 of pupils or staff on any of the nine grounds specified i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and member of the Traveller community.

### **What should a student do if they are being bullied?**

#### **TELL**

##### **Who do I tell?**

Teacher, Caomhnóir, Principal, Parent or Friend.

#### **How do I tell?**

Tell a teacher after class

Hand up a note inside your homework

Phone the school

E-mail the school with details to [ratoathbullyline@lmetb.ie](mailto:ratoathbullyline@lmetb.ie)

### **What should a parent do if they know that their son/daughter is being bullied?**

- Assure them that it’s not their fault and that you will help them to sort it out.
- Contact the school- arrange an appointment with the tutor
- Prepare for that meeting- bring notes and details of events from your child’s point of view
- Ask that the incident be investigated and ask what supports the school can offer your child.
- Work with the school to develop a strategy to deal with the problem
- If the problem continues, return to the school and make an appointment to meet the Principal/Deputy Principal

## **What can the staff of Ratoath College do when Bullying occurs?**

- When an incident is reported we will speak privately and individually to those involved.
- We will take a calm, problem-solving, non-confrontational approach
- We will inform the parents of both parties should we deem it to be a bullying incident.
- As every case is different we will discuss strategies with individuals concerned
- If we believe that reconciliation between the parties is possible we will act as mediators.
- We will keep a written record of all bullying incidents
- We will endeavour to provide counselling for the victims of bullying and the bully.
- If this is a serious case of victimisation of one party by another it will be reported directly to the (Deputy) /Principal. Serious incidents of bullying behaviour may in accordance with the Children First and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools, be referred to the HSE Children and Family Services and/or Gardaí as appropriate
- The student(s) will be subject to the school's Code of Behaviour and may be suspended/excluded from the school should they threaten the health and safety of others

### **Useful contacts and websites:**

[www.coolschoolbullyfree.ie](http://www.coolschoolbullyfree.ie)

[www.youthhealthinfo.com](http://www.youthhealthinfo.com)

#### **Bernardos:**

Tel: 01-4530355

Call-save: 1850 222300

[www.bernardos.ie](http://www.bernardos.ie)

#### **Support for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Students**

[www.belongto.org](http://www.belongto.org) Telephone: 6706223

[www.teni.ie](http://www.teni.ie) (Transgender Equality Network Ireland)

#### **Childline**

Tel: 1800666666

[www.childline.ie](http://www.childline.ie)

#### **Ombudsman for children**

Tel 01 4757333

[www.oco.ie](http://www.oco.ie)

***This policy was reviewed in March 2014***