ST. PAUL'S COMMUNITY COLLEGE

ANTI-BULLYING BEHAVIOUR POLICY

St. Paul's Community College is a state school run by the Education Training Board of Ireland (ETBI). Our school is run under the ethos of the ETB and the core values underpinning its characteristic spirit. St Paul's is a state, co-educational, multidenominational school underpinned by the core values of the Ethos of excellence in Education, Care, Equality, Community and Respect.

St. Paul's Community College is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe learning environment for all our students, staff, parents and visitors. Bullying behavior, in any form, is unacceptable and will not be tolerated in our school community. We promote the motto: "***If you see it then say it*** !"

1. Introduction

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 St. Paul's Community College has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools* which were published in September 2013 (Circular 045/2013).

This policy comprehends bullying behaviour that is either perpetrated by students or experienced by students in the school. The school reserves the right to apply its Anti-Bullying Behaviour Policy in respect of bullying behaviour that occurs at a location, activity, function or programme that Is not school related if in the opinion of the Principal and/or Board of Management the alleged bullying behaviour has created a hostile environment at school for the victim, has infringed on the rights of the victim at the school and/or has materially or substantially disrupted the education process or the orderly operation of the school. The matter of intra-staff bullying behaviour is addressed in the following ETB policies.

- Bullying Prevention Policy- Compliant Procedure for ETB Staff
- Harassment/Sexual Harassment prevention policy- Compliant procedure for ETB Staff

The Board of Management of St. Paul's Community College recognises the very serious nature of

bullying behaviour and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of students and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

A positive school culture and climate which-

- Is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity.
- Encourages students to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a supportive environment and promotes respectful relationships across the school community.

- Effective leadership.
- A whole school approach.
- A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact.
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that-
  - Build empathy, respect and resilience in students; and
  - Explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- Effective supervision and monitoring of students.
- Support for staff.
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

2. Definition of Bullying Behaviour

In accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools* (DES, 2013) bullying behaviour is defined as follows:

The "repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against others". Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, which should not be condoned, can scarcely be described as bullying. However, when the behaviour is systematic and ongoing it is bullying. Every student has the right to an education free from fear and intimidation. The purpose of this policy is to protect that right for each and every student attending St. Paul's Community College.

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition for bullying behaviour will be dealt with in accordance with St. Paul's Community College Code of Behaviour.

Those who engage in bullying behaviour in a non-physical way often do not realise that their actions may have serious legal consequences for them. Parents may be advised to report incidents to the Gardaí, the reality is that bullying may constitute a criminal offence.

For example, bullying behaviour may constitute a criminal offence under:

1. Post Office Amendment Act 1951 (section 13}
2. Criminal Damage Act 1991
3. Non-Fatal Offences against the Person Act 1997 (Section 10)

Section 10 of this act deals with harassment and provides that a person may be guilty of this crime if he/she:

'...without lawful authority or reasonable excuse, by any means including by use of the telephone, harasses another by persistently following, watching, pestering, besetting or communicating with him or her.

'For the purpose of this section, a person harasses another where-

A) He or she, by his or her acts intentionally or recklessly, seriously interferes with the other's peace and privacy or causes alarm, distress or harm to the other, and
B) His or her acts are such that a reasonable person would realise that the acts would seriously interfere with the other's peace and privacy or cause alarm, distress or harm to the other'.

Section 10 harassment is an arrestable offence and, if convicted on indictment, carries a jail term not exceeding 7 years. On conviction also, a court may make an order that the guilty party may not, for a specified period, communicate by any means, or come within a specified distance of a person's home or workplace.

Section 2 of the Prohibition of Incitement to Hatred Act (1989) makes it a criminal offence for a person to publish or distribute written material, to use words, behave or display written material... or to distribute, show or play a recording of visual images or sounds, if the written material, words, behaviour, visual images or sounds, as the case may be, are threatening, abusive or insulting and are intended or, having regard to all the circumstances, are likely to stir up hatred.

Those convicted on indictment under this provision may be sentenced to a maximum of 2 years imprisonment and/or a fine of up to £10,000.00.

Even where bullying behaviour does not amount to a criminal offence, the perpetrator may be held liable of damages in civil court proceedings. For example, statements made on social media sites are covered by the provisions of the Defamation Act 2009, which at section 2 defines a defamatory statement as 'one which tends to injure a person's reputation in the eyes of reasonable members of society'.

Many, young and not so young, seem to feel that by posting anonymously on social networking sites, they can guarantee that their identity is protected. This, however is not the case. Indeed, in many cases the content of messages makes it easy to identify the perpetrator. In any case, where the Gardai have grounds for believing that criminal activity may be occurring, application can be made to the courts requiring the internet service provider or others in possession of relevant information to divulge a perpetrator's identity.

Where it is felt that bullying behaviour may amount to a criminal act, St. Paul's Community College will seek legal advice and the matter will be reported to the Gardaí.

3. Types of Bullying Behaviour

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying behaviour.

A) Student Behaviour:

Your behaviour in school is considered to be intimidating and/or of a bullying nature when:

- You deliberately exclude or isolate another student by writing insulting remarks about them anywhere on the student's personal or school property or any communal student area e.g., toilets, notice boards etc.
- You say/write unpleasant comments to/about another person, e.g., name calling, being sarcastic, spreading rumours, teasing, and making sexually abusive comments.
- You push, hit, kick and/or threaten another student, trip another student, make any physical contact or use any form of violence, severe or in any other way, against another student.
- You take or damage another student's property, demand or extort another student's money.
- You use very aggressive body language towards another student. This could take the form of a particular tone of voice or facial expression which conveys aggression and/or dislike towards another student.
- You use abusive or aggressive language on any public forum. This includes Internet websites, social media platforms or the use of text messages or SMS to intimidate another student, publicly or anonymously.
- You use persistent name-calling another student by making very personal remarks about them which are hurtful, insulting or humiliating. This could berelated to another student's physical appearance, accent, distinctive voice character, academic ability, sexual orientation, gender and/or race.
- You attempt to intimidate or abuse any school personnel.
- You prevent another person from participating fully in any school activity.

This also includes:

- Deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying behaviour,
- Cyber-bulling and
- Identity-based bullying behaviour such as homophobic and transphobic bullying behaviour, racist bullying behaviour based on a person's ethnicity and bullying behaviour of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

B) Teacher Behaviour

Teachers need to ensure that they do not engage in, instigate, or unwittingly reinforce bullying behaviour by:

- Using sarcasm or other insulting or demeaning forms of language when addressing students.
- Making negative comments about a student's appearance or background.
- Humiliating or intimidating a student directly or indirectly.
- Using any form of inappropriate physical contact.

4. Bullying behaviour- Public Forums

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and will be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with St. Paul's Community College Code of Behaviour.

5. Key Staff Designated to Investigating Bullying Behaviour

St. Paul's Community College has a zero tolerance towards anti-bullying behaviour, having a duty of care in the context of Section 6.8.3 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools. Every member of the school community is welcome and encouraged to report suspected bullying behaviour where incidences are suspected or occur. Reports or incidences of bullying behaviour may be investigated by the following staff members:

Chaplain

Guidance Counsellor(s)

Year Heads

Tutors/ Student Support Team

Deputy Principal(s)

Principal

Students, parents, non-teaching staff or members of the wider community should feel welcome to report their concerns to any member of the teaching staff- including the Principal and the Deputy Principal(s). In this regard, every member of staff is deemed to be a relevant teacher in the context of Section 6.8.3 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools.*

6. Education and Prevention Strategies to combat Bullying Behaviour

The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that are employed in St. Paul's Community College include:

- Induction/ Transfer Programmes
- Parent Information Meetings
- SPHE
- CSPE
- Religious Education
- LGBTQ+ Club
- Well-Being
- RSE Programme
- Friends for Life Programme
- CyberSafeKids Workshops
- Stand Up Awareness Week
- School of Sanctuary
- Yellow Flag initiative

- St. Paul's Community College makes it clear to all members of the school community that bullying behaviour of any kind is unacceptable, irrespective of whether it is a student, a staff member, or any other person that is the subject of such behaviour. In this context, all members of the school community have a duty to bring to the attention of the Principal, Deputy Principal(s), Year Heads, Tutors, Student Support Team, Chaplain,Guidance Counsellor and/or HSCL any incident of cyber-bullying or harassment that they know about or suspect.

- In preventing bullying behaviour students must know how to tell and who to tell. In these regards students could:

    - Make a direct approach to a teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
    - Hand up a note with homework.
    - Make a phone call to the school or a trusted teacher in the school.
    - Get a parent/guardian or friend to tell on their behalf.

- While, when investigating and dealing with bullying behaviour the primary focus is on resolving differences and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than apportioning blame), St. Paul's Community College nevertheless reserves the right to take disciplinary action (up to and including suspension and expulsion), where such is warranted, in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour, against those who bully others.

- The prevention and awareness of bullying behaviour is integral to this policy and students will, through both their curricular and extra-curricular programmes, be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth.

- The focus of St. Paul's Community College prevention strategy will be to build empathy, respect and resilience in students.

- Students will be provided with opportunities to understand the cause and effects of bullying behaviour, the issue of identity-based bullying and in particular homophobic and trans-phobic bullying. This will include the display of LBGT posters and discussions with parents about statements of welcome and respect for LGBT members of the school community, teaching the Social, Personal, Health Education (SPHE) resource, Growing up LGBT and participating in LGBT awareness events.

- St. Paul's Community College recognises that the SPHE curriculum makes specific provision for exploring bullying behaviour as well as area such as integration, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships. Also,the Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) programme provides opportunities to explore and discuss areas such as human sexuality and relationships, which has particular relevance to identity-basis bullying. St. Paul's Community College will make every reasonable effort to ensure that the full potential of these programmes to combat bullying behaviour is exploited.

- Prevention and awareness raising measures will also deal explicitly with cyber-bullying through educating students about appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while on-line and also through developing a culture of reporting any concerns about or incidents of bullying behaviour to a member of the teaching staff.

- St. Paul's Community College will, in all its communications with students and their parents, commencing with the induction of the student into the school, make efforts to highlight the importance of students reporting incidents of or concerns about bullying behaviour to a member of the teaching staff on the clear understanding that these matters are being reported in confidence. This means that if a student who draws concerns about bullying behaviour to the attention of a member of staff will not have his/her identity divulged in any way that might result in those against whom allegations are being made identifying the source of the report.

- More than anything else, the combating of bullying behaviour will depend on the extent to which students note and report bullying behaviour. In this context, the well- being of students is very much dependent on the vigilance of their fellow students and their preparedness to report concerns about bullying behaviour to the teaching staff and/or school management. All teaching staff will reinforce this point to students on an ongoing basis.

- St. Paul's Community College will adopt a school-wide approach (involving management, staff, parents, students and members of the wider community with a connection to the school) to prevent and combat bullying behaviour. In this context, the school is committed to engaging with parents. The school will involve parents in the development of policies and practices to combat bullying behaviour. It is important that parents realise that anyone can be a bully and anyone can be a target of bullying behaviour. It is not just other people's sons and daughters that can bully. Here, also, it is important to realise that disagreements between young people are part and parcel of negotiating the road to adulthood and that every youthful disagreement should not be treated as a full-blown bullying episode.

- In accordance with 6.8.9 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools* (Circular 045/2013) 'parents and students are expected 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.

- Where necessary St. Paul's Community College will seek the assistance of and work with NEPS, the HSE and the Gardai, as appropriate, to combat bullying behaviour- identify the perpetrators and support victims.

- In combating bullying behaviour, St. Paul's Community College will take particular account of the needs of students with disabilities or SEN. This will involve improving inclusion, focusing on developing social skills, paying particular attention to student induction and cultivating a school culture that respects everyone and values helping one another.

- St. Paul's Community College is devoted on an on-going basis to raising awareness among staff of bullying behaviour, building an understanding of what bullying behaviour is and providing guidance on how it is best combated- prevents, detected, investigated, documented and resolved. This session will also provide opportunities for exploring potential that exists within all teaching subjects and within extra- curricular activities to foster an attitude of respect for all, to promote the value of diversity, to address prejudice and stereotyping, and to highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.

- A clear focus of all staff development around combating bullying behaviour will be the enablement of all staff to implement this policy and the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools consistently and effectively.

- St. Paul's Community College is committed to providing access to continuous professional development for staff to enable building the capacity of the school to combat bullying behaviour.

- St. Paul's Community College Well Being programme, RSE and SPHE programme will specifically address the issue of bullying behaviour with each year group, each school year.

- St. Paul's Community College will, each year, link in with the national initiatives to highlight the whole issue of bullying behaviour and staying safe using modern technology.

- St. Paul's Community College Student Council will be encouraged to have an awareness around and recognise bullying behaviour and to bring concerns about bullying behaviour to the attention of a member of staff.

7. Procedures for Noting and Reporting an Incident of Bullying Behaviour

The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:

The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame).

The school's procedures will be consistent with the following approach.

Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including students, parent(s)/guardian(s)) understand this approach from the outset.

Reporting bullying behaviour

- Teachers will report incidences of bullying behaviour to the SST and Year Head and complete the Incident Report Form.

- The formal noting and reporting of an incident of bullying behaviour is seen to be an integral part of our Code of Behaviour in the school. An **'Incident Report Form'** is freely available to all members of staff. (see *Appendix* for copy).
- Any student or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.
- All reports of bullying, no matter how trivial, will be noted, investigated and dealt with by our teachers. In that way it is hoped that students will gain confidence in 'telling'.
- Serious cases of bullying behaviour by students will be referred immediately to the Principal and Deputy Principal(s).
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour subject teachers will refer cases to the school Chaplain via the Year Head.
- Parents or guardians of victims and bullies will be informed by the Principal, Deputy Principal(s) or Year Head of incidents when necessary, so that they are given the opportunity of discussing the matter.
- Parents/guardians may contact the appropriate Year Head by contacting the school office or HSCL teacher, regarding incidents of bullying behaviour which they might suspect or that has come to their attention through their children, parents, guardians or others.
- Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNA's), caretakers and cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the Principal or Deputy Principal(s)
- In the case of a complaint by a student regarding a staff member, this should be brought to the attention of the Principal or Deputy Principal(s) by the

student,parent or guardian.

8. Investigating and dealing with reported incidents:

In investigating and dealing with reported incidents, the Principal or Deputy Principal(s) will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.

- Where possible, incidents should be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved. All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all students concerned.
- A calm, unemotional problem-solving approach is essential
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) 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.
- Students who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way.
- When analysing incidents of reported bullying behaviour, the Principal or Deputy Principal(s) should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealingeffectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
- If a group is involved, each member may be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved may be met as a group where deemed appropriate.
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after the interview.
- Follow up meeting may be appropriate to confirm that the incident has been resolved.

9. Procedures for dealing with confirmed incidents of bullying.

- In cases where it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, the following procedure will be followed
    - Where incidents of bullying behaviour occur, students will be asked to stop immediately and made to meet the Chaplain (or in her absence the school Counsellor) and sign the 'Student Anti- Bullying Behaviour contract'.Parents/Guardians will also be informed that their child is signing this form.
    - If the bullying behaviour does not cease their parent(s)/guardian will be informed and invited to come to the school. They too will be required to sign the 'Student Anti-Bullying Behaviour Contract' and meet with the Deputy Principal(s).

- It will be made clear to the student engaged in bullying behaviour that they are in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts will be

made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the student being bullied.

- More serious sanctions may be applied in cases where the bullying behaviour does not stop. Sanctions may include, but not exclusively, exclusion or loss of privilege in taking part in extra-curricular activities, detention, suspension and ultimately expulsion for extreme cases of bullying behaviour that does not stop.
- It will also be made clear to all involved (each set of students and parent(s)/guardian(s)) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the student being disciplined, his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school.

10. Follow up and recording.

- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the Principal or Deputy Principal(s) must, as part of their professional judgement, take the following factors into account:
  - whether the bullying behaviour has ceased.
  - whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far **as is** practicable.
  - whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable.
  - any feedback received from the parties involved or their parent(s)/guardian(s)
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should be arranged separately or together if appropriate.
- Counselling provision will be made within our school for students who engage in bullying behaviour and their victims. Two sessions of counselling will be mandatory for a student who has engaged in bullying behaviour.
- Where a parent(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian{s) must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures, by reference to The Board of Management
- In the event that a parent{s)/guardian{s) has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children

- All records must be retained by the teacher in the student's file located in the main school office and stored away safely for six years after thestudent has left the school.
- Our anti-bullying behaviour policy also embraces those members of the wider school community who come directly in daily contact with our students. They are encouraged to play a positive role in assisting our school to counter bullying behaviour by reporting such behaviour to parents and/or schools as appropriate.

11. Established intervention strategies.

- Teacher will refer to the relevant Year Head
- Negotiating agreements between students and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process.
- Working with parent(s)/guardian(s)s to support school interventions.
- No Blame Approach
- Other such strategies that form best practice as Anti-Bullying Interventions.
- Behaviour Management approach via the school Code of Behaviour
- Mediation

The school's programme of support for working with students affected by bullying is as follows:

- All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the students affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience e.g.
    - Moving Up (Transfer Programme)
    - Pastoral care system
    - Guidance & Counselling
    - Check and Connect Mentoring
    - Peer Mentoring
    - Student Support Team
- Students should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher

12. Supervision and Monitoring of Students

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

At least once in every school term, the Principal will provide a report to the Board of Management setting out the following:

The overall number of bullying cases reported since the previous report to the Board.

Confirmation that all cases reported, dealt with in accordance with the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools. The minutes of the Board of Management's meeting will record the Principal's report but in doing so will not include any identifying details of the students involved.

13. Prevention of Harassment

The Board of Management confirms that St. Paul's Community College will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of students or staff or the harassment of students or staff on any of the nine grounds specified i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race or ethnicity.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____

This policy has been made available to all personnel, published on the school's website and provided to the Parents Association.

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, be readily accessible to parents and students on request and provided to the Parents Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: _____(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date:_____

Signed: _____(Principal)

Date: _____

Name: **Appendix** – *Bullying Behaviour Report Form*

_____ Class: _____

1. NAME(s) and **CLASS (es)** of student (s) engaged in bullying behaviour

NAME / S:

_____

CLASS /ES:

_____

DATE: _____ TIME:

_____

2. SOURCE of Bullying Concern / Report (Tick relevant box /es) *			**3. LOCATION** of Incidents (tick relevant box /es) *	
Student Concerned			Classroom	
Other Student			Corridor	
Parent			Toilets	
Teacher			School Grounds	
Member of staff			Other	
Other				

4. Name of PERSON(S) who REPORTED the bullying concern

5. TYPE of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es) *)

Cyberbullying		Malicious Gossip	
Damage to Property		Name Calling	
Intimidation		Physical Aggression	
Isolation / Exclusion		Other	

6. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the **RELEVANT CATEGORY** with a tick.

Homophobic/Transphobic	Disability/SEN related	Ethnicity	Other (specify

7. BRIEF DESCRIPTION of bullying behaviours and its impact.

8. ACTIONS TAKEN / FOLLOW UP

9. I have informed the Year Head.	YES / NO
10. I have informed the Chaplain/Guidance Counsellor (please delete accordingly).	YES / NO
11. I have informed the Principal.	YES / NO

Signed: _____ (Relevant Teacher) **Date:** _____

Date matter was resolved: _____ Initials: _____