

Donabate-Portrane



Educate Together

Adult Anti-Bullying Policy

1. School Philosophy:

All people working or involved in Donabate/Portrane Educate Together National School have the right to work in an atmosphere and environment in which they feel safe, valued and secure and in which respect for self and others is the norm. The Staff of our school, conscious of the need for a positive working environment, will encourage the involvement of the wider school community in the achievement of these ends through a 'whole school' approach whereby every individual is involved in the development of a school environment where each person is respected and valued.

2. Definition of Adult-Bullying:

The Health and Safety Authority define bullying as

“Repeated inappropriate behaviour, direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical or otherwise, conducted by one or more persons against another or others, at the place of work and/or in the course of employment, which could reasonably be regarded as undermining the individual’s right to dignity at work.” (<http://www.hsa.ie>)

While an **isolated** incident of the behaviour described above may be an affront to dignity at work, it is not considered to be *bullying*.

3. Types of Bullying:

- **Physical Aggression:** pushing, punching, kicking, shoving, poking, tripping people up; 'horseplay'; assaults or threats of physical assaults; damage to a persons work area or property.
- **Extortion:** demands being made for money often accompanied by threats. Victims may also be forced into theft on behalf of the bully. Repeated requests for loans from another staff member is also categorised as bullying as it may lead to feelings of discomfort and awkwardness.
- **Gesture Bullying:** non-verbal threatening gestures, glances which can convey threatening and frightening messages.
- **E –bullying:** abusive telephone calls, text messaging or e-mailing is a form of intimidation and bullying.
- **Isolation:** the isolation, exclusion, and/or ignoring of a victim by a group or individual, often accompanied by a campaign of writing insulting remarks.
- **Verbal Bullying:** uncomplimentary remarks; slandering, ridiculing, maligning an employee or his/her family; persistent name calling which is hurtful, insulting or humiliating; using a person as the butt of jokes; abusive and offensive slagging or other behaviour likely to cause offence.

In summary, bullying can take many different forms, which usually include (but is not exclusively):

- Intimidation or harassment
- Aggression
- Verbal abuse
- Humiliation
- Undermining
- Dominance or abuse of power
- Different or unfavourable treatment
- Exclusion or isolation

Key factors of bullying are that it is:

- Persistent
- Unwanted
- Subtle
- Non-physical

4.Procedures for Dealing with Instances of Bullying:

1.Decide to take action:

The person who feels that he/she may be bullied should immediately ask the other person to stop. They should explain clearly that the behaviour is unacceptable as it may be the case that the person does not realise its effect. Where the individual finds it difficult or embarrassing to communicate directly with the other person, the fact that the behaviour/conduct is unacceptable should be communicated through a third party. A written response may be given if this is the case.

2.Address the matter informally:

The alleged victim should seek a meeting with the other person involved. This meeting may be facilitated by a third party (colleague, BoM Staff Representative, Post-holder with responsibility for the Pastoral Care of Staff or the INTO Staff Representative). At this meeting, a request should be made that the behaviour cease.

If parties fail to resolve their difficulties at this stage, the individual should then submit a written complaint to the Principal and commence the Formal Procedure.

Every person who feels victimised because of bullying, has the right to bypass the Informal Procedure if they so wish.

Where an investigation is required it will be conducted thoroughly, objectively, with sensitivity and utmost confidentiality, and with due respect for the rights of both parties.

5. Formal Procedures:

- 1) The principal (if (s)he is not involved) intervenes at this point. If the principal is one of the parties in the dispute, then the Chairperson of the BOM will nominate a member of the BOM or if this is not appropriate a third party may be asked to become involved.
- 2) The investigation where practicable will be conducted at all times by two persons, and if requested, where possible, one will be of the same sex as the complainant.
- 3) All parties involved should be informed that the complaint has proceeded to Formal Procedure stage.
- 4) The Principal (or BOM nominee or third party, as the case may be) should ask the complainant to furnish full details of the alleged incidents of bullying and should confirm in writing:
 - i) The name of the alleged individual undertaking the bullying;
 - ii) The date of the incident/incidents;
 - iii) The nature of the conduct complained of;
 - iv) The names of any persons present.
- 5) The investigation team will investigate any complaint, initially by interviewing the member of staff making the complaint who has the right to be accompanied by a person of their choice.
- 6) The alleged individual will be invited to meet the investigation team and will also have the right to be accompanied by a person of their choice. They will be given full details of the allegations, and the opportunity of replying to them. Responses will be recorded.
- 7) Any response will first be evaluated by the investigation team and, where witnesses are identified by both parties, the investigation team will investigate the matter further with such persons.
- 8) If the investigation reveals the complaint is valid, prompt attention and action designed to stop the bullying immediately and prevent its recurrence will be taken and the School's disciplinary procedure will be used as appropriate.

The investigation team will at all times

 - a) Act in a fair and impartial manner and deal with the matter sensitively, having regard to the nature of the problem and the principles of due process;
 - b) Exercise judgement and make decisions which they consider necessary to resolve matters.

Appeal

Appeal from any decision or outcome of the formal investigation may be in writing to the BOM within 5 days of verbal communication of the decision.

Appeal & Board of Management

The BOM should consider the issues and investigate the matter:

- a) The board may enquire in the background of the difficulties including obtaining details on the sequence of initiative taken at previous stages.
- b) The Chairperson of the board (or another person nominated by him/her) may meet with individuals involved individually or collectively and may also request written submission from the parties, having regard also to the principles of due process.
- c) The board may request the principal to furnish a written submission (if (s)he is not one of the parties involved)
- d) The board may afford the parties an opportunity to present their case orally at

a board meeting, either separately or in each other's presence as appropriate.

e) Following oral presentations, the board may designate the Chairperson to meet with the parties again, separately or jointly, if further clarification is required to work towards solution.

f) The board shall act in a fair and impartial manner in order to achieve resolution and shall deal with the matter sensitively, having regard to the nature of the problem.

Having considered all the matters, the BOM shall reach a view on the matter not later than 20 school days after the receipt of the written appeal.

Where the BOM finds that bullying has not occurred, both parties should be informed accordingly. No action shall be taken against the complaint provided the allegation was made in good faith. If the complaint was brought maliciously, it should be treated as misconduct and appropriate action taken (as detailed below).

When the BOM finds that bullying has occurred, the board should deal with the matter appropriately and effectively. This may include:

a) The issuing of a clear warning that bullying is not acceptable in the school workplace and that it will not be tolerated.

b) A demand that all forms of bullying cease and that acceptable patterns of interaction will be established between the parties.

c) An instruction to the offending party that (s)he apologise/ express regret or give assurance that the bullying behaviour will cease.

d) A commitment from the offending party to contact counselling or welfare services (e.g. Employee Assistance Service for Teachers).

e) More serious disciplinary sanctions may be commensurate and appropriate such as:

- Oral warning
- Written reprimand
- Written warning
- Final written warning
- Suspension
- Dismissal
- Mediation
- Counselling

The BOM should monitor the situation to ensure that resolutions are being implemented.

Where an employee is victimised as a result of invoking or participation in any aspect of the complaints procedure, including acting as a witness for another employee, such behaviour will also be subject to disciplinary action.

It is the policy of the school that issues of Adult-Bullying are best dealt with within the school. However, no aspect of this policy affects any employee's individual legal rights to take their complaint outside of the school.

6. Sanctions and miscellaneous matters

All employees have the right to be treated with dignity and respect and complaints by employees will be treated with fairness and sensitivity and in as confidential a manner as possible. It is a matter for the recipient of the behaviour to decide whether the

behaviour is unwelcome irrespective of the attitude of others to the matter. Employees who make a complaint or who give evidence at proceedings will not be victimised in any way.

This policy extends to bullying by co-workers, customers or other school contacts either in the workplace or beyond the workplace including conferences and training and may extend to school related social events. It includes the differential treatment of an employee because he/she has rejected or accepted bullying, and also includes persons working with the school who are working through employment agencies or on vocational training.

The school in particular expects its senior members of staff to have a particular responsibility to ensure that bullying does not occur, to eliminate any bullying of which they are aware and to ensure that complaints are addressed speedily. Employees of the school are expected to contribute to the achievement of a bullying free environment through co-operation with strategies to eliminate bullying.

7. Reference:

Code of practice for employers and employees on the prevention and resolution of bullying at work (Health and Safety Authority)

ADULT ANTI-BULLYING CODE

DONABATE/PORTRANE EDUCATED TOGETHER NATIONAL SCHOOL IS A 'BULLY – FREE ZONE.

We say no to bullying at any level in this school.

Our school community will not tolerate unkind, hurtful or insulting remarks.

All reports of bullying will be taken seriously following the formal and informal complaints procedures as laid out in this policy.