



etb

Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna
Mhaigh Eo, Shligigh agus Liatroma
Mayo, Sligo and Leitrim
Education and Training Board

NORTH CONNAUGHT COLLEGE
ANTI BULLYING POLICY
(as part of attendance and participation guidelines)

The Board of Management of North Connaught College is publishing this document as the official Anti-Bullying Policy. MSLETB as patron of the College has approved this publication. Copies of the policy are available at the College and to each person who is admitted to the College.

Scope of policy: This policy applies to the whole college community in their relationships with each other- students, teachers, management, Board of Management, parents, and all ancillary staff.

Rationale:

1. Department of Education and Skills requires Colleges to have a written anti-bullying policy.
2. The ETB/trustees have a statutory obligation to ensure that a policy is in place that reflects the principles and values of the educational philosophy of the College.
3. Involving and encouraging all members of the College community in developing, formulating and reviewing this policy on bullying promotes partnership, ownership and implementation of a living policy.
4. NCC considers bullying as a health and safety issue and a discipline issue.

Links to Mission Statement

At North Connaught College students are encouraged to actively participate in a learning environment, where everyone is supported, respected as unique and where every effort is made to develop knowledge and skills appropriate to their needs.

Links to Ethos

We aim to inspire a love of learning in a safe environment for all our students, irrespective of ability, and through personable and enthusiastic encouragement to lead all on to develop as caring, respectful Individuals in a challenging world.

Objective

We aspire to fulfil this commitment by fostering an atmosphere of respect, understanding, and encouragement between all who teach, work and learn in the College, so that the development and contribution of every individual can be acknowledged, and all can work together to benefit personal growth and the common good.

Background/Content of Policy

Definition: Bullying consists of repeated inappropriate behaviour whether by word, by physical action or otherwise, directly or indirectly applied, by one or more persons against another person or persons which undermines the individual person's right to personal dignity.

(Note:

- This is not to be confused with the good-natured banter that goes on as part of the normal social interchange between students or the normal professional classroom management by teachers.

- Cyberbullying is bullying behaviour that occurs using electronic technology. The once-off occurrence of cyberbullying may well be seen as amounting to bullying behaviour).

Statement on Bullying

- Every person in NCC is entitled to respect and to be free of any type of bullying.
- NCC will work proactively, as far as it can, to ensure that bullying does not take place.
- Reporting incidents of bullying is responsible behaviour.
- A record will be kept of all reported incidents of bullying.
- The matter will be dealt with seriously.
- NCC will offer support to those involved.
- Appropriate action will be taken to ensure that it does not continue.

Types of behaviour deemed to be inappropriate (this is not an exhaustive list)

- Humiliation; including name-calling, reference to academic ability, physical appearance etc.
- Intimidation; including aggressive use of body language and threats, including demands for money.
- Verbal abuse, anonymous or otherwise.
- Physical abuse or threatened abuse.
- Aggressive or obscene language specifically directed at an individual or group.
- Offensive joke; whether spoken, photographic, or by email, text messaging, or other electronic means e.g., “social networking sites”.
- Silent telephone/mobile phone calls
- Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls/text messages/e-mails/website messages.
- Victimization; including very personal remarks.
- Exclusion and isolation; deliberately leaving people out of conversations and groups (including social media groups)
- Intrusion through interfering with personal possessions.
- Repeated assignment to duties/projects that are obviously unreasonable.
- Repeated unreasonable deadlines or tasks.
- An attack by rumour, gossip, innuendo or ridicule on any individual’s reputation.
- Persistent attempts to undermine the authority or knowledge of others through repeated questioning/commenting.
- Coercion of Sexual Favours
- Cyberbullying
- Homophobic bullying

Indications of Bullying/Behaviour – Signs and Symptoms (in the person being bullied)

- Consistent, or a pattern of Absenteeism
 - Anxiety about travelling to and from College
 - Unwillingness to go to College.

- Avoiding certain days or lessons.
- Uncharacteristic nervousness in class
- Punctuality problems.
- A reluctance to take part in previously enjoyed activities.
- Deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school.
- Unexplained changes in mood or behaviour; it may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or more specifically after longer college holidays.
- Visible signs of anxiety – stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, illness, absenteeism.
- Spontaneous out-of-character comments about either students or teachers.
- Possessions missing or damaged.
- Increased requests for money or stealing money.
- Unexplained bruising or damaged clothing.
- Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling him/her.

Anti-Bullying Procedures

Consultation with education partners through:

- Discussion and agreement with students through Staff and the Student Forum.
- Input from staff as agreed at Staff Meetings and via individual emails.

It is College policy to provide **education on bullying** in the following manner:

- On enrolment/induction all students will be advised as to the nature and content of NCC anti-bullying policy.

Support Structure/ Pastoral Care

Chain of support: Student/ Teacher / Deputy Principal / Principal / Care Team/ Guidance Counsellor/ Student Council / Board of Management.

Procedures for Noting and Reporting Incidents of Bullying

- Students should discuss any incident of bullying with a tutor or another trusted adult within the college system; **this is responsible behaviour rather than “telling tales”**.

Incidents of bullying behaviour, no matter how trivial, which are drawn to the attention of a staff member, fellow student or student council will be dealt with in the following manner:

- Appropriate personnel (Principal/Deputy Principal) will interview all the individuals involved in a bullying incident. Where either party is under 18 years of age, parents will be informed.
 - The alleged victim(s) and alleged perpetrator(s) of the incident will be spoken to and encouraged to solve the problem.

- The alleged victim(s) and perpetrator(s) will be invited to write down any relevant details. Written statements from all involved in the incident will be noted.
- All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all persons involved.
- Records will be kept of all incidents and of the procedures that were followed.
- Where the incident is deemed to be minor, a verbal warning will be given by an appropriate member of staff to the perpetrator(s) to stop the inappropriate behaviour, pointing out how he/she is in breach of the Attendance and Participation procedures, and college anti bullying policy. The incident will no longer be considered if there is no recurrence within that academic year.
- If there is a serious incident or recurring bullying behaviour, the matter will be reported to the Deputy Principal or Principal. The process outlined above will be followed and sanctions may be applied in line with the College Disciplinary Procedure.
- Perpetrators and victims of bullying may be referred to counselling.
- In the case of a complaint regarding a staff member, this should be referred immediately to the Principal.
- Where cases, relating to either student or teacher, remain unresolved at college level, the matter should be referred to the Board of Management.
- A student may appeal disciplinary decisions by writing to the Principal within 10 days of receipt of written decision.

If bullying continues, we must consider the right of others to a safe learning environment, free from harassment. It may not be possible to retain the perpetrator in the College.

Bullying by students

He/she must understand the school's primary obligation is to protect the victims of bullying, and this may mean permanent exclusion for persistent bullying behaviour.

Bullying by teachers/staff

Where a student believes that they are being bullied by a teacher, they should raise this with someone they trust. This matter will be referred to the Principal and will be dealt with under the College's Grievance Procedures.

Bullying of Teachers

The College will support teachers where they are subject to bullying by a student or colleague. The procedure outlined above will be followed. NCC will work to ensure that a climate of respect is always maintained.

Roles and Responsibilities

The college management team are responsible for ensuring that the policy is implemented. Everyone has a role to play in creating a safe environment, and in the identification and reporting of incidences of bullying behaviour.

Success Criteria

Well-being and happiness of the whole college community. An atmosphere of safety and respect.

Monitoring and implementation

Monitored and implemented by all members of staff.

Review and evaluation

The College will monitor, review, and evaluate this Policy and all related work and procedures on an ongoing basis to ensure legal compliance and maintenance of best practices

Legislation/Equality proofing

The most recent antibullying legislation will be adhered to if an issue of bullying occurs.

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) came into force in May 2018. The GDPR is a legal framework that sets guidelines for the collection and processing of personal information of individuals within the European Union (EU). The College will use this as a source of legislation as it was designed to modernise laws that protect the personal information of individuals. This will link to any information gathered about an individual if a bullying issue occurs.

Note: Retention of Data.

(Never destroy if they relate to a learner who was under 18 at course commencement. For learners aged 18+ at course commencement, retain for year of graduation/course completion + 7 years, or longer if an ESF-funded programme).

Signed _____Dara Mulvey_____ Date _____6th December 2023_____

Chairperson, Board of Management

Review Date: _____Academic Year 2025 - 2026_____