St. John's Student Anti-Bullying Policy
Be kind. Be brave. Speak up.
Together, we make St. John's a safe, caring and welcoming place for everyone

Why This Policy Matters

At St. John's Education Centre, we are committed to making our school a safe, caring, and respectful place for everyone. Bullying hurts people and has no place here. This policy helps stop bullying, support anyone affected and ensure every student feels protected and valued.

Your Rights and Responsibilities

Your Rights:

- To feel safe, respected and included.
- To be heard if something is bothering you.
- To get help if you or someone else is being bullied.

Your Responsibilities:

- Treat others with kindness and respect- no matter how different they are from you.
- Speak up if you see bullying.
- Don't join in, laugh at, or ignore bullying.
- Help create a positive school culture.

What Is Bullying?

Bullying is when someone purposely hurts, upsets or leaves out another person again and again, using their power to make the other person feel scared or powerless. It can be:

- Physical – e.g. hitting, pushing, stealing, tripping.
- Verbal – e.g. name-calling, mocking, racist or sexist comments, threats.
- Social – e.g. spreading rumours, excluding someone, manipulating friendships.
- Cyberbullying – e.g. sending hurtful messages or images online, making fake profiles, sharing private content without permission.
- Identity-based – bullying someone because of their:
    - Race or ethnicity
    - Religion or beliefs
    - Gender or gender identity
    - Sexual orientation
    - Disability or learning difference
    - Family situation (e.g. being in care)

Repeatedly doing the following to the same person in order to hurt, upset, or isolate them is considered bullying:

- Spreading rumours or lies about someone.
- Making others pick sides in a friendship fight to isolate someone.
- Giving someone a repeated "look" or eye-roll to intimidate or mock them.
- Whispering or laughing while looking at someone to make them feel left out.
- Constantly ignoring someone or pretending they don't exist.

• Creating group chats or social media posts to talk badly about others.
• Making someone the target of jokes, especially about their looks, family, background or identity.
• Recording or photographing someone without permission to embarrass them.
• Constantly calling someone names or using labels (e.g. “weirdo,” “loser,” “gay” in a hurtful way).
• Using sarcasm or “jokes” to put someone down, even if you claim you’re “just messing.”

What Is Not Bullying?
Not all unkind behaviour is bullying.
For example:
• A one-time argument or falling out.
• Accidentally hurting someone.
• Not wanting to be close friends anymore (unless it’s done to hurt or exclude).
• Behaviour that happens because of certain special needs or conditions.

Even if it’s not bullying, it can still be hurtful and we will help sort it out.

When Does This Policy Apply?

This policy applies:
• Everywhere in the education centre - in classrooms, the yard, on corridors, in toilets etc
As well as:
• On walks, trips or outings.
• On the way to and from St. John’s.
• On any online platform (even outside of school hours) if it affects students at the centre.

What To Do If You See Bullying

You are a **bystander** if you witness bullying, but you have the power to become a **defende**r and make a difference.

Don’t:
• Laugh, forward, like or share bullying posts - this only encourages the behaviour.
• Stay silent and pretend it’s not happening - ignoring bullying makes it worse.
• Join in or watch without saying anything - silence can be seen as support for bullying.

Do:
• Support the person being targeted - offer them a kind word, let them know they’re not alone.
• Stand up and say “that’s not okay” if you feel safe to do so - sometimes, just speaking out can stop bullying.
• Tell any staff member or trusted adult - reporting bullying ensures the right people can step in to help.
• Encourage others to speak up as well - when more people stand together, bullying has less power.
• Offer to accompany the person being bullied to a safe space or staff member if they feel scared to do so alone.
• Be an ally or buddy - check in on the person later and make sure they’re okay, even after the bullying is over.

Remember
"If you don't report it, you support it."

How St. John's Prevents and Responds to Bullying – What we do

We work hard to prevent bullying by:
• Encouraging students to be kind, understanding and welcoming to everyone.
• Stopping bullying behaviour early by keeping an eye on what goes on in classrooms, corridors, when out and about and when using computers.
• Listening to what students and parents say when we make decisions about bullying.
• Checking and updating our anti-bullying rules - and asking you to help us improve them.

If bullying happens:
• We take every report seriously.
• Staff listen carefully and treat everyone with respect.
• We talk to everyone involved privately.
• Parents/guardians are informed if needed.
• Consequences depend on what happened - and may involve outside help (e.g. counselling or the Gardaí in serious cases).

Supports Available

If you're affected by bullying - whether you were hurt, involved or just witnessed it - support is available:
• One-on-one chats with staff.
• Counselling and support
• Restorative conversations to rebuild trust and understanding.
• In serious cases, outside help from agencies like Tusla or An Garda Síochána.

How To Get Help

You can:
• Talk to any staff member - including the Education Programme Leader and staff in the office.
• Ask for a private 1:1 meeting.
• Talk to your parent or guardian so they can support you too.

Final Message

Bullying is never acceptable.
You have the right to feel safe.
We're here to help - don't stay silent.
Let's work together to keep St. John's a safe, respectful and kind place for everyone.
"If you don't report it, you support it."