

Policy	Counter-Bullying
Reviewer	Mr Anthony Griffin, Assistant Head Student Progress
Last Reviewed Changes	Autumn Term 2024

Relevant SoJ Education documentation: [Bullying Policy](#)

Victoria College is committed to the importance of safeguarding children as outlined by Children, Young People, Education and Skills (CYPES)

“CYPES is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and requires all staff and volunteers to share this commitment”

www.gov.je

Purpose and Context

At Victoria College, our community is based upon respect, good manners and kindness. We are committed to providing a safe and caring environment that is free from disruption, violence and any form of harassment so that every one of our pupils can develop his full potential. We expect our pupils to treat members of staff with courtesy and co-operation so that they can learn in a relaxed, but orderly, atmosphere. All pupils should care for and support each other.

Victoria College prides itself on its respect and mutual tolerance. Parents/guardians have an important role in supporting Victoria College in maintaining high standards of behaviour. It is essential that College and homes have consistent expectations of behaviour and that they cooperate closely together. Acceptance of this policy forms part of our standard terms and conditions. This policy is available to parents of pupils and prospective pupils on our website and on request. It is also available and known to staff and pupils, including recently appointed staff.

Scope

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Bullying, harassment, victimisation and discrimination will not be tolerated. We treat all our pupils and their parents fairly and with consideration and we expect them to reciprocate towards each other, the staff and the school. Any kind of bullying is unacceptable. This policy applies to all pupils in the school.

1. Definition of Bullying

"Bullying may be defined as: *Behaviour by an individual or group, repeated over time, that intentionally hurts another individual or group, either physically or emotionally*".

Ref. Olweus D. (1993) *Bullying at School : What we know and what we can do.* Blackwell.

Bullying is the intentional hurting, harming or humiliating of another person by physical (including sexual), verbal (including email, chat room and SMS messages), and emotional means (by excluding, tormenting or spreading malicious rumours). It can involve manipulating a third party to tease or torment someone. It can involve complicity that falls short of direct participation. Bullying is often hidden and subtle. It can also be overt and intimidatory.

Bullying may involve actions or comments that are racist, sexual, sexist or homophobic, which focus on religion, cultural background, disabilities or other physical attributes (such as hair colour or body shape). Bullying can happen anywhere and at any time and can involve everyone - pupils, other young people, staff and parents.

Cyberbullying - Definition

Mr Bill Belsey, the creator of the web site www.cyberbullying.org defined this unpleasant and particularly intrusive phenomenon in the following terms:

"Cyberbullying involves the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated, and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others."

Cyberbullying can involve Social Networking Sites, like Snapchat, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, TikTok, emails and mobile phones used for SMS messages and as cameras.

2. The School's Response to Bullying

At Victoria College, we always treat bullying, including allegations of bullying, very seriously. It conflicts sharply with the school's policy on equal opportunities, as well as with its social and moral principles. Bullying can be so serious that it causes

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psychological damage, eating disorders, self-harm and even suicide, and, whilst bullying is not a specific criminal offence, there are criminal laws which apply to harassment and threatening behaviour.

3. Signs of Bullying

Changes in behaviour that may indicate that a pupil is being bullied include:

- Unwillingness to return to school
- Displays of excessive anxiety, becoming withdrawn or unusually quiet
- Failure to produce work, or producing unusually bad work, or work that appears to have been copied, interfered with or spoilt by others
- Books, bags and other belongings suddenly go missing or are damaged
- Change to established habits (e.g. giving up music lessons, change to accent or vocabulary)
- Diminished levels of self-confidence
- Frequent visits to the Medical Centre with symptoms such as stomach pains, headaches etc
- Unexplained cuts and bruises
- Frequent absence, erratic attendance, late arrival to class
- Choosing the company of adults
- Displaying repressed body language and poor eye contact
- Difficulty in sleeping, experiencing nightmares etc
- Talking of suicide or running away

Although there may be other causes for some of the above symptoms, a repetition of, or a combination of these possible signs of bullying should be investigated by parents and teachers.

4. Preventative Measures

We take the following preventative measures in place in order to ensure that bullying does not become a problem which is associated with Victoria College:

- All new pupils (including our youngest pupils) are briefed thoroughly on the school's expected standards of behaviour. They are told what to do if they encounter bullying. We guarantee that whistle-blowers who act in good faith will not be penalised and will be supported.
- All new members of staff are given guidance on the school's anti-bullying policy and in how to react to allegations of bullying in their first week at Victoria College. They are required to read the school's policy as part of their induction. We use appropriate assemblies to explain the school policy on bullying. Our PSHE programme is structured to give pupils an awareness of their social and moral responsibilities as they progress through the school. The programme is

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structured to enforce the message about community involvement and taking care of each other.

- Other lessons highlight the issue of bullying and reinforce this message by teaching moral and spiritual values that show bullying to be unacceptable and by developing social skills.
- All our pupils are encouraged to tell a member of staff at once if they know that bullying is taking place.
- All reported incidents are recorded and investigated at once. We always monitor reported incidents. Records of any incidents are kept securely on MyConcern in order that patterns of behaviour can be identified and monitored.
- We have a strong and experienced pastoral team of tutors, pastoral leaders, and Heads of Year and Heads of House are trained in handling any incidents as an immediate priority, and are alert to possible signs of bullying.
- Our pastoral team gives support and guidance to other staff on handling and reporting incidents, and on the follow-up work with both victims and bullies.
- Staff are always on duty at times when pupils are not in class and patrol the school site, particularly areas where bullying might occur. They are trained to be alert to inappropriate language or behaviour.
- All pupils and their parents are made aware of the contents of the school's anti-bullying policy and are aware that they can download copies from the school's web site. All pupils know how to report anxieties to their tutor or to another member of the pastoral team.
- Our Reception and all our social spaces display advice on where pupils can seek help, including details of confidential helplines and websites connecting to external specialists, such as Childline.
- All pupils have access to a telephone helpline enabling them to call for support in private.
- We provide leadership training to our Head Boy and his team of prefects which specifically covers the importance of offering support and assistance to younger and to vulnerable pupils
- We reserve the right to investigate incidents that take place outside school hours, on school visits and trips and that occur in the vicinity of the school, involving our pupils.
- We welcome feedback from parents and guardians on the effectiveness of our preventative measures.

5. Cyberbullying - Preventative Measures

In addition to the preventative measures described above, Victoria College:

- Expects all pupils to adhere to its charter for the safe use of the internet. Certain sites are blocked by our filtering system and we monitor pupils' use.
- May impose sanctions for the misuse, or attempted misuse of the internet.
- Issues all pupils with their own personal school email address.

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- Offers guidance on the safe use of social networking sites and cyberbullying in PSHE lessons which covers blocking, removing contacts from 'buddy lists' and sharing personal data.
- Offers guidance on keeping names, addresses, passwords, mobile phone numbers and other personal details safe.
- The use of mobile phones is not allowed anywhere during the school day.

6. Procedures For Dealing With Reported Bullying

If an incident of bullying is reported, the following procedures are adopted:

- The member of staff to whom it was reported, or who first discovers the situation, will control the situation, reassure and support the pupils involved.
- He/she will inform an appropriate member of the leadership team as soon as possible.
- The member of staff will calmly explain the range of disciplinary measures that are potentially involved.
- The victim will be interviewed on his/her own and asked to write an account of events.
- The bully, together with all others who were involved, will be interviewed individually and asked to write an immediate account of events.
- The incident should be recorded on MyConcern.
- The DSL will inform the tutors, Heads of Year and Heads of House of both the bully/bullies and the victim[s] as soon as possible. In very serious incidents, the Head will be informed.
- The victim will be interviewed at a later stage by a member of the pastoral team separately from the alleged perpetrator. It will be made clear to him why revenge is inappropriate. He will be offered support to develop a strategy to help himself.
- The alleged bully will be interviewed at a later stage by a member of the pastoral team, separately from the victim, and it will be made clear why his behaviour was inappropriate and caused distress. He will be offered guidance on modifying his or her behaviour, together with any appropriate disciplinary sanctions as set out in the school's Behaviour Policy; for example: detention, withdrawal of privileges or fixed-term exclusion. In particularly serious and/or persistent cases, the College will investigate the option of permanent exclusion.
- The parents/guardians of all parties should be informed and invited, where appropriate into College to discuss the matter. Their support should be sought.
- A way forward, including disciplinary sanctions and counselling, should be agreed. This should recognise that suitable support is needed both for children who are being bullied and for pupils who bully others, as well as dealing with appropriate disciplinary measures in accordance with the school's Behaviour Policy.
- A meeting involving all the parties, with close staff supervision, could be helpful in developing a strategy for all concerned to close the episode.
- A monitoring and review strategy will be put in place.

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- In very serious cases, and only after the Head has been involved, it may be necessary to make a report to the Police or to the Social Services. However, it is the policy of Victoria College to attempt to resolve such issues internally under the school's own disciplinary procedures, unless the matter is of such gravity that a criminal prosecution is likely. The school may exclude a pupil, either temporarily or permanently, in cases of severe and persistent bullying and in the event that the support put in place for the bully does not result in the modification of behaviour to an acceptable level.
- Cases of Bullying would be reported to the Board of Governors as part of the safeguarding report at each meeting. This is to include pupil and staff members.

7. Sanctions

Sanctions will depend on the severity of the situation and the degree of intent. The College will use its full range of traditional sanctions which range from detentions, loss of privileges, lunchtime exclusion, short term exclusion, involving appropriate outside agencies, including details on the bully's school record, through to permanent exclusion. If appropriate a mentor will be appointed to provide counselling for the bully – this will be negotiated with parents.

8. Training

Staff training is an essential part of raising awareness and instrumental in reducing the likelihood of bullying at times and places where it is most likely to occur. The Assistant Head Student Progress provides support and advice to all staff.

9. Complaints Procedure

Parents and pupils are encouraged to use our complaints procedure (which is published on our website) if they feel that their concerns about bullying (or anything else) are not being addressed properly.

Appendix A

% of responses who rated "Control of Bullying" as either "Good" or "Very Good"

	2020-21	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Parents	56.8	64.2	58.9	71.3

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Students		64.2	69.8	69.5
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Scale	<i>Unsatisfactory</i>	<i>Requires Attention</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Outstanding</i>
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NB – the Staff and Student Surveys have different grade boundaries for measuring success, based on nationally standardised data.

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Appendix B – Counter Bullying letter sent to parents, 25th November 2023

This statement is one of the outcomes of a parental Counter-Bullying Workshop held at the College during Anti-Bullying week 2022.

Parent Testimonies

“Parents, if your son mentions someone is unhappy or boys are being unkind to another boy, please share it with school. Please don’t dismiss something, even if it appears trivial or you think you shouldn’t get involved - you can’t know how much the child has already endured that day or week, and something that seems trivial to you may just be the straw that breaks the camel’s back. You could make a massive difference to that child’s life by reporting concerns immediately.”

Parent of a Y10 student

“Please don’t assume your son isn’t involved or aware. They may not be the perpetrator but ‘bystanding’ and not stepping in to help a victim, or not speaking up about it, helps facilitate the bullying and increases the isolation of the victim. Everyone has a role to play.”

Parent of a Y7 student

When bullying occurs, we are committed to recognising it, and supporting those students who are impacted by it. For those families experiencing it, it is the single most important thing they need and expect us to help with. We know that unkindness, anti-social behaviour and bullying happen everywhere, it happens in every school, and it happens here. When it does, the impact can be significant if the situation is not tackled head on and with clarity. We need all members of our community to be vigilant, be willing to call it out and support our commitment to addressing it.

This statement is one of the outcomes of a parental Counter-Bullying Workshop held at the College during Anti-Bullying week 2022. It will be added as an appendix to our Counter Bullying Policy and it will form part of an annual review between the College’s Leadership Team and parents.

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What our community has said

Each year, we now use Kirkland Rowell to survey our community and measure satisfaction in key areas. In this table, the numbers show the percentage rating these areas as *good* or better.

	2022		2021	
	Parent	Student	Parent	Student
Developing Moral Values	72.0 (+10.2)	72.4	61.8	No data captured in 2021 for students
Happiness of Child	69.9 (+9.6)	77.9	60.3	
School Discipline	65.3 (+7.9)	66.1	57.4	
Control of Bullying	64.2 (+7.4)	64.2	56.8	
Encouraging and Listening to Parents' Views	76.3 (+14.6)	n/a	61.7	

From the work we have been doing:

- i. We see that improvements have been made over the last 12 months;
- ii. We recognise there is still more to do in all areas, and we will continue to strive for improvement

Last year, we outlined some of the measures we were taking to improve in these areas. Those actions are listed at the end of this document. They will continue in the background, along with some additional actions for this year, also listed below. However, the focus for this year is engaging with parents, and enabling boys to call out unkindness when they see it.

What we need from our boys

We are a College community that expects boys to stand up for what is right, and speak out against unkindness when they see it. We acknowledge that this may not always be easy, doing the right thing sometimes isn't, but it is the fundamental next step to embedding the culture of kindness. The expectations of students at Victoria College are:

- If someone is being unkind, whether you know them or not, tell them that they are being unkind.
- If, for whatever reason you aren't able to tell the person they are being unkind, tell a teacher or a parent. This can be done discreetly, and in confidence.
- By you not saying anything, the person being unkind might not realise that they are being unkind, or might think that you are ok with it and therefore is more likely to continue the behaviour.
- However insignificant it might seem to you, be mindful that you do not know what else has been going on for that boy; there may have been other incidents during the day. Each on their own may not seem like much but the cumulative impact over time can be very damaging.

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How parents can support us best

Firstly, please talk to your sons about this. Talk to them about the importance of speaking up and of calling out poor behaviour. Please encourage them and reassure them that doing the right thing is telling someone when they have been unkind, even if they are a friend. We should be, and we need to be, a school that looks out for those who need help and support.

We also extend this to our parents. Above all else, we need information. Without it, it is incredibly hard to give the child the help they need. Often, a young person might ask their parents not to tell the school. We really do understand the feeling of fear about what might happen next. But it is our experience that bullying flourishes where eyes do not see. When a light is shone on it, it shrivels up and goes away. It is very helpful to have specific details, or screenshots of online behaviour so that we can deal with unkindness or bullying swiftly and accurately. You should have no hesitation in making this decision for your child. They need you to do this for them, when they are in crisis.

Please do not make a judgement that what you hear does not sound like much and does not need reporting. If a boy is subject to ten negative behaviours during the day, all of which are reported to different parents but none of them think it merits reporting to us, one of our boys has been subject to persistent bullying during the day but our ability to act and support him is much reduced. By asking your sons to speak up and let you know of unkindness going on, it gives those being bullied hope that others are supporting them and that they don't always have to be the one reporting negative behaviour to teachers.

How to report bullying

If you have a concern about anything, please do so using one of the below options:

- Contact your son's Head of Year or his Tutor
- "Report a Concern" button on the College website
- Email Mr Griffin – a.griffin@vcj.sch.je

We deal with things sensitively and discreetly, but everything is followed up.

Confirmed bullying outcomes

All confirmed instances of bullying will result in a parental meeting with Head of Year and Assistant Head Student Support, and the most appropriate of the following sanctions based on the type and nature of the behaviour: Book, Reflection or temporary exclusion. Pastoral support work will also be used to ensure that this unwanted behaviour is not repeated. The Student Support team will also ensure that the person who has been bullied receives appropriate pastoral support to ensure their wellbeing and self esteem are protected.

Conclusion

To make further progress this year, we believe that all adults have to be on the same page when it comes to bullying, so we seek your active support. We must recognise that children should not be expected to deal with bullying without support, and that sometimes that support will have to involve sharing information that the child would prefer not to be shared. The only certainty is that doing nothing will lead to nothing improving. We all have the best interests of children at the forefront of our minds and decision-making processes. We are very grateful for your support.

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School Discipline & Control of Bullying actions (2022-23)

Embedding a culture of kindness remains central to Victoria College's aims this year. This needs to be the work of everyone. In addition to the good work begun last year, the following specific new measures are in place:

- *Fuller engagement with parents through Counter-Bullying workshop and subsequent follow up*
- *Newly created Head of Year position with responsibility for monitoring behaviour, and intervening and celebrating as appropriate*
- *Continued focus on positive behaviour management and routine strategies in the classroom*
- *Promote DEI through calendared events and the Assembly programme; International Women's Day, Pride Week, International Men's Day, Jersey Women's Refuge and so on*
- *Counter bullying policy rewritten and clearly communicated and delivered*
- *Promotion of and greater understanding of neurodiversity, including staff training*
- *Regular engagement with JCG and Beaulieu students and staff.*
- *Continuation of joint school lessons and events in KS3*

School Discipline & Control of Bullying actions (2021-22)

One of the College's strategic goals this year is embedding a culture of kindness. This, and how it will be achieved, has been clearly explained to the students, staff and parents. Unkind, rude or insulting language or behaviour is swiftly investigated and sanctioned using our new approach to rewards and sanctions. We have developed our joint Student Charter with JCG to codify our expectations for our students.

- *Our Values Based reporting system is now in operation across the school. Boys' respect and aspiration is explicitly commented on in each of their subjects.*
- *Our Assembly programme consistently reinforces the importance of kindness and respect towards one another.*
- *We continue to celebrate differences in religion, lifestyle, gender, race and background in a variety of ways, enabling boys to develop the skills of empathy towards people with many different points of view.*

As well as developing opportunities to reward boys who are getting it right, it is important to acknowledge that boys will sometimes get it wrong and we have developed and improved our approach to sanctioning poor behaviour:

- *Each lesson of the week, a senior member of staff is on "Assist" Duty, who can respond quickly to any poor behaviour in the classroom that is preventing the learning of others.*
- *We hold daily detentions to swiftly sanction wrong choices made by students. We have increased the frequency of Book (Saturday) detentions.*
- *We are resolved to challenging any bad, inappropriate or unkind language and sanctioning it.*
- *We have communicated with parents the importance of working with us when it comes to information sharing and reinforcing the messages of kindness.*

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Useful links

Our Counter-bullying policy:

<https://www.victoriacollege.je/vcj-policies>

States of Jersey Counter-bullying policy:

<https://www.gov.je/SiteCollectionDocuments/Education/P%20Counter%20Bullying%20Policy%2020190722%20MV.pdf>

NSPCC Guide to helping children deal with bullying and cyberbullying

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/what-is-child-abuse/types-of-abuse/bullying-and-cyberbullying/>

Culture and Ethos policy, including sanctions for bullying

<https://www.victoriacollege.je/vcj-policies>

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