



CPB PARENTS ASSOCIATION

**PARENTS GUIDE
HANDLING BULLYING**

Version 1.1



CPB Parents Association – Guide to handling Bullying for Parents

The issue of Bullying is a concern for many parents. A Nationwide Study of Bullying in Irish schools indicates that 1 in 6 Secondary School students have been bullied at some time. Coláiste Pobail Bheanntaí has a comprehensive Anti Bullying Policy in place and it is available on the [School Policies](#) section of the School website. We strongly urge parents to fully review the School's Anti-Bullying Policy. In addition to the School's policy we offer parents the following guidance notes, tips and recommended resources list.

Bullying – A definition

The School's Anti Bullying Policy defines bullying as :

"Bullying is repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another or others."

Acts of bullying include :

Physical aggression, Damage to property, Extortion (demands often accompanied by threats), Intimidation. Abusive phone calls and/or texts, Exclusion/Isolation, Name calling. 'Slagging' (considered bullying when extends to personal remarks made deliberately and repeatedly about appearance, clothing, personal hygiene, sexual orientation or references of an uncomplimentary nature to members of ones family). Cyber-bullying (Facebook, social networking sites etc.)

1. Some Tell Tale signs for Parents

The following are examples of some potential signs and symptoms of bullying-

Anxiety about travelling to and from school. Requesting parents to drive or collect them, changing route of travel, avoiding regular times for travelling to and from school.

Unwillingness to go to school /refusal to attend/ mitching.

Deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school.

Pattern of physical illnesses (e.g. Headaches, stomach aches)



Unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour; it may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or more especially after longer school holidays.

Visible signs of anxiety or distress- stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, bedwetting.

Spontaneous out of character comments about either pupils or teachers.

Possessions missing or damaged.

Increased requests for money or stealing money.

Unexplained bruising or cuts or damaged clothing.

Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling him/her.

Opt out of activities they used to enjoy.

Self-harm.

Those signs do not necessarily mean that a pupil is being bullied. If repeated or occurring in combination, those signs do warrant investigation in order to establish what is affecting the individual.

Source : CPB Anti-Bullying Policy

2. What to say to Children if they are being Bullied ?

Any pupil through no fault of their own may be bullied. Anything, no matter how small that sets the victim apart from the bully or bullies may be sufficient to set off the chain of bullying. Regardless of why or how the bullying commenced the child being bullied tends to blame themselves or imagine that there is something "wrong" with them. Often it is simply a case of being in the wrong place at the wrong time. The first important message to share with your child if they are being bullied is that it is absolutely not their fault and that you will help and support them to get through this.

The Anti Bullying Centre of Trinity College recommends the following specific tips for children to handle bullying situations.

- **What to Do**



Act as confident as you can. Face them and tell them clearly to stop. Try and be calm and move away from them.

- **Don't Hit Out**

If someone is bullying you don't try to hit/kick them. You may get badly hurt in a fight and even if you don't, the bully can sometimes use how you hit them against you, and make it seem like you are the bully.

- **If They Call You Names**

If they tease you or slag you off, try and laugh it off. Don't let them see that they have hurt you. Bullies like to get a reaction, if they don't get one there is no point in them bullying you.

- **Remember, It's Not About You**

Often people who bully other people do it to make themselves feel better, because they are unhappy, at school or at home. Remember that they have the problem not you. Don't believe what they say to you, and don't blame yourself.

- **Tell Your Friends/People You Can Trust In Class**

Tell them what is going on and how you feel. Ask them to come with you to tell a teacher if you are afraid. Ask them to stand up with you against the bully.

- **Don't hit back with violence.** Getting into a physical fight with someone can be dangerous.

- **Tell Someone**

If you're being bullied, try and tell someone about it. Talk to :

Your parents

Someone in your family

Your teachers

A Helpline

Your Mentor



- **If you are afraid to tell because it might make things worse**, tell the person you talk to that you are afraid if they do anything it might make it worse, ask them to find a way to help you deal with it that won't.
- **What To Say When You Tell**
 - Tell them what has happened;
 - Who is doing it;
 - How often it has happened;
 - Did anyone see or hear what went on
 - What have you tried to do about it.

3. How to go about Reporting bullying incidents ?

When it comes to reporting incidents of bullying to the school, the first step for Parents is to read the Coláiste Pobail Bheanntaí Anti Bullying Policy which is available on the [School Policies](#) section of the School website. The policy outlines clearly how the school will deal with each report of bullying and includes the Bullying Incident Report Form which will be filled out for the bullying incident and used in the subsequent investigation of the matter.

Specific details Parents should have to hand when reporting bullying are :

- Details of what has happened;
- Who is doing it;
- How often it has happened;
- Did anyone see or hear what went on
- What has the pupil tried to do about it to date

Reports of bullying incidents should be made to the relevant Class Tutor. However, if the student finds it easier to speak with a particular teacher to report the matter that is also fine. The school's Anti Bullying policy outlines the steps which will be taken after a bullying incident is reported.

ISPCC Blue Shield Campaign – If you wish to report bullying totally confidentially, Coláiste Pobail Bheanntaí is now part of the ISPCC's Blue Shield



Campaign which allows anyone to report bullying at the school confidentially online via the school's website. Search for 'Blue Shield' in the search box on the school website and follow the link and instructions. Or use the following direct link (must be copied precisely to your browser) :

<https://www.ispcc.ie/?act=antibully&hash=cbf3feb242721185d993ee2c7a4739cb>

4. WHAT PARENTS CAN DO ?

Discuss Bullying Behaviour with your children

Remember, your child can be either the victim or the bully; we all have the ability to bully others within us. Make them aware that bullying is not simply "physical" and discuss what kind of effects it can have.

Empower pupils to report incidents

...statements to children like 'you shouldn't tell tales' and discouraging "whistleblowing" at a young age, can have detrimental repercussions when it comes to incidents of bullying. Always make it clear to your children that it is always right to tell when they see something wrong.

Challenge every incident of Bullying Behaviour that is witnessed

...lead by example. Where you see negative behaviour highlight it.

Be aware of your own behaviour.

...don't confuse your children by talking one way and acting another, avoid inconsistent discipline and power-assertive methods of discipline. Exercise democracy in your home, give the children responsibility. Promote confidence and enhance their self esteem.

Source : Anti Bullying Centre – Trinity Colleges

5. Further Information Sources

- (i) **Anti-Bullying Centre** - Trinity College - <http://www.abc.tcd.ie/school.html>



- (ii) **Schooldays.ie** - Useful website including articles about Bullying and also parent forums discussing how to handle this issue - <http://www.schooldays.ie/articles/bullying>
- (iii) **'GET WITH IT'** – Office of Internet Safety - The Office of Internet Safety has published a series of very useful guides under the "GET WITH IT" banner. Garda Damian White spoke to all CPB students last year and distributed 2 of the series of guides to all Parents/Guardians in April 2013. Additional very helpful guides for parents in the GET WITH IT series which can be downloaded from the links below include :

GET WITH IT – Guide to Cyberbullying

<http://www.internetsafety.ie/Website/OIS/OISWeb.nsf/page/DPCY-7LYJ4V1343473-en>

GET WITH IT – Guide to Social Networking Websites for parents

<http://www.internetsafety.ie/Website/OIS/OISWeb.nsf/page/PHRK-7JHJDT1458515-en>

GET WITH IT – A Parents Guide to filtering technologies

<http://www.internetsafety.ie/Website/OIS/OISWeb.nsf/page/PHRK-7JHJQAQ1453615-en>

For the full 'GET WITH IT' series and related publications, refer to the Office of Internet Safety's website and publications list at

<http://www.internetsafety.ie/website/ois/oisweb.nsf/page/publications-en>

- (iv) ISPC "Shield My School" Anti-Bullying Campaign resources - <http://www.ispcc.ie/campaigns-lobbying/resources/4816>
- (v) Department of Education website regarding School anti-bullying policies, anti-bullying forum and details of the upcoming 2013 Action Plan on Bullying - <http://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Bullying/> -
- (vi) Coláiste Pobail Bheanntaraí Anti-Bullying Policy – May 2012 - <http://www.colaistepobailbheanntarai.com/cpb/wp-content/uploads/2013/05/Anti-Bullying-Policy-May-2012.pdf> -



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Coláiste Pobail Bheantraí

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