

COUNTER BULLYING POLICY

Our responsibility is to create a climate in which people respect each other and where each person feels they have recourse should something go wrong. We clearly state in our handbooks and code of conduct that bullying and initiation is not tolerated.

Defining bullying behavior

Negative behaviour is classified as bullying if it is:

- Specifically directed at a particular individual or group of individuals
- Intentional and repetitive
- there is a power or age differential

What happens if a child is found to be a bully?

Appropriate action must always be taken.

What action is taken for both the victim and the perpetrator?

We believe we have created a climate where boys who face situations they cannot handle on their own are encouraged to come forward and meet with an experienced senior staff member. Boys also know that we will take action against bullies and that we are not afraid to deal with antisocial behavior.

If a boy comes forward to report that he is being bullied we follow the steps below:

- Listen to the victim and take the matter seriously.
- Ask the victim how they would like to deal with the situation. If it is appropriate we will give the victim the opportunity to deal with the matter by calling in the perpetrator to a face to face meeting.
(If the matter is deemed to be serious, we will inform the parent of the victim of how the matter will be dealt with).
- Hold a meeting with the victim and perpetrator present where the victim has the chance to explain to the bully how the bully's actions are affecting him.
- Ask the bully to respond.
- Ask the bully and victim how the matter could be resolved and establish an agreement of how they will interact in future.
- Formally record the incident so that the bully knows the matter is serious and the victim sees that the matter has been taken seriously. (Meeting with the parents of the bully also helps to drive the point home). Formal written warnings are to be issued when appropriate.
- Check periodically with the victim and bully that the pattern has come to an end.

These interventions have proven to be successful in practice. The victim is empowered because he has dealt with the bully himself. In most of the cases we have dealt with, the bully is generally remorseful and undertakes to treat the victim and others with respect. Where bullies are resistant to change, the consequences escalate and expulsion from the College may be required.

In extreme cases of anti-social behavior/bullying, an enquiry is held and should there be grounds to suspect that the bully is a threat to any one he would be suspended from school pending an investigation. This will be followed by a disciplinary hearing. In such cases, the College Code of Conduct allows for immediate expulsion of the boy should he be found guilty of bullying.

Bullying and initiation practices

Bullying is an ongoing deliberate behaviour of degrading the dignity of another individual. It is a targeted action that is designed to cause physical, emotional or mental harm to a particular person or to a particular group of persons.

Traditionally in some schools, initiation has been seen as a way to create a bond of loyalty to a group or team. It usually involves secrecy and is often characterized by poor judgment. In extreme cases initiated members are expected to forgo the right to question the purpose and leadership of the group. We do not permit initiation since we advocate loyalty to a set of principles and hold individuals accountable for their actions, whether on their own or as part of a group. We believe expecting individuals to think for themselves is the cornerstone of a democratic society.

We do not see a place for initiation in schools. Instead we seek to bond boys through shared positive experiences.

Further notes

St Charles College differentiates itself by offering an age appropriate boarding structure. By deliberately keeping the grades separate, we have ensured that bullying and initiation have not become institutionalised in our College.

Access to help

Boys have open doors to staff including the Senior Management of the College. For boarders, the House Masters and nursing staff are part of a team that looks out for the welfare of the boys at the College.