

Ostia Participants Handbook

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OSTIA

A Christian Community
For
University Students

The Story of Ostia



In the year 383, St. Augustine left his native home of North Africa to head to Rome to take up an important lecturing position in Rome. When he arrived at Ostia, the port of the city of Rome, he couldn't have known what was going to unfold.

His mother, Monica, had intended travelling with him but Augustine, headstrong as always, gave her the slip and carried on alone. This was to be the beginning of a journey which would lead Augustine to the height of his career, but not only that, it would lead him to question things that had seemed so certain to him up until now. This was the beginning of Augustine's journey of conversion to Christianity which will finally come about, in Milan, in the year 386 when he heard the song of a child telling him to "take up and read..." (in Latin: *Tolle Lege*). He took up the Bible and as he read he realised what he had been searching for all his life.

Augustine was baptised by St. Ambrose and began his first experiment with community living at a place called Cassiciacum (now called Cassago Brianza, about 19km from Milan) where he formed a philosophical community made up of close friends, and his son, Adeodatus.

Having made things up with Monica the two were heading back to Africa in the year 387, when, once again in the port of Ostia, the two of them shared a mystical experience while discussing the utter silence in which God can be heard once the clamour of all that is going on in the world is calmed.



In the space of four years Augustine completed a circle that began and ended in Ostia. Four years, the length of most University studies, that was to change his life and lead him to become one of the greatest thinkers the world has ever known.

Monica died two weeks after this mystical experience and Augustine, the son who was the cause of so many tears on her part, went on to serve the people of God as a priest and a bishop and was to provide the impetus for a style of community living which the Augustinians continue to try to emulate.

The members of the Ostia community are invited to share in that style of living for a period of one year while they, just like Augustine, pursue their University studies.



Prayer, Study, Service and the sharing of the gifts and talents of the individual are the characteristics of those who try to live the Augustinian vision of community life.

The Augustinians

- Living, Praying and Searching together -



The OSTIA Community is a work of the Irish Province of Augustinians. The community shares the same Augustinian spirituality as it is expressed in the Rule and the Constitutions of the Order. At the heart of this spirituality are a number of principles:

1. **Community:** As Augustinians, we live in community. This is not about simply living in the same building but is about much more. Augustinians live in community because they share the conviction that it is only by searching for, with, and through one another, that we will find God, the source of true happiness. The sharing of things in the community is only the outward expression of that more important sharing that must take place if the community is to be truly Augustinian - the sharing of our search for God, our faith journey, and our hopes and dreams. In doing this, each one of us who is made in the image and likeness of God comes to know himself more by seeing himself reflected in the brothers who are, too, made in the image of God. Together we form the image of God - not just many images joined together but a more complete and perfect image because we are united.

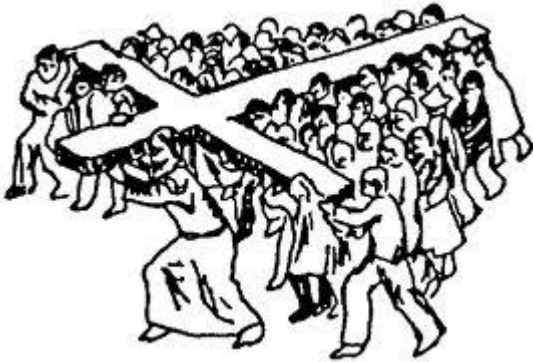


2. Friendship:

The respect for the brothers is not one that is borne out of fear or mere custom but is an expression for the esteem in which we hold them. We begin by treating one another as friends so that we can come to be true friends who, as Augustine reminds us, are the stepping stones on our road to God. In this way our respect for one another as friends helps us to remain united as we travel on the road to God, who is love. As Augustine says:



"The friendship which draws human beings together in a tender bond is sweet to us because out of many minds it forges a unity." (*Conf II.5.10*).



This unity is one in which the brothers become the bearers and supporters of one another: "Nothing is so great a proof of friendship as the carrying of a friend's burden" (*On 83 Questions. Q. 71.1*).

3. **Love and Respect:** Our love for one another is always only a pale reflection of the love that God has for us. By sharing our journey together our combined love shines more brightly so that not only the members of the community, but also those who see the community can say with the psalmist: "How good and pleasant it is, when brothers live in unity..." In Augustine's community the brothers were reminded of the respect they were to have for one another each time they went to the dining room - on the wall was written the following saying of St. Augustine: "Let him who loves to harm the good name of those who are absent know that there is no place for him at this table."



4. **Prayer:** Our living together is in vain if God is not at the centre of our life. As the psalmist says: "In vain do the builders labour, if the Lord does not build the house." Our prayer, with one another, and for one another, is that which enlivens our day and helps us to be salt for the earth and light for our world.



As we share our prayer together our need for one another, if we are to truly stand as brothers in God's presence, becomes evident. The sharing of the prayer of each one strengthens the prayer of the community.

5. **Searching:** The Augustinian community is one that understands itself as being committed to a shared search for God in the life of each of the brothers and in the life of the community itself. By sharing our search for God we come to know ourselves and one another; as Augustine said: "Search for God to know yourself, search for yourself to know God".



Frequently Asked Questions:

What do members of the OSTIA community actually do?

- Each member participates in the day to day life of the community. They spend some time together in prayer and in study. They are also involved in the life of the church community at St. Augustine's, Limerick.

How long does it last?

- Each member is expected to commit for a period of eleven months which is not extendable.

How do I participate?

- There are two ways to participate: as a full member of the community, and as an associate member. Full members participate in all the community activities; associate members participate according to their availability.

Will this interfere with my University studies?

- NO! The programme of the OSTIA community will be tailored to suit the requirements and timetables of the group of participants.

What does it cost?

- A subsidised rent of €450.00 per month covers the basic living costs. Expenses relating to community activities are covered by the Augustinians. A deposit of €500 is paid at the beginning of the year. This deposit will be forfeited if damage to the premises is incurred, otherwise, it will be returned at the end of the academic year.



If you have further questions or would like more information about the OSTIA community, please feel free to ask. You can use the contact information available to you in this leaflet.

You can write to:



The Director
Ostia Community
Augustinian Lane
off Thomas Street
Limerick V94 DA29

Or email: ostiacommunity@gmail.com

General Principles of the Ostia Community and Code of Behaviour:

This Code of Behaviour forms part of the overall vision for the Ostia Community and should be read in conjunction with the other policies and documents you will find in this booklet.

A community, like a family, is a complex reality, structured on the interpersonal interactions of its members. However, unlike a family, the members of a community come from different backgrounds, with differing expectations, customs, and practices. A shared Code of Behaviour, therefore, is of help to the members of the community as they learn a way of living together.

A Code of Behaviour is not a guarantee that misunderstandings will not arise; nor can it ensure that there will not be tensions. It cannot promise that arguments will not happen because of it; not even that someone may even be hurt or offended by the action of another. It does, however, provide us with a framework within which all of these things, all facets of normal human interaction, can be addressed in a consistent and equitable manner, where each member of the Community can know that they are respected, valued and helped to grow. As a religious community, based on the values of the Gospel, we strive to ensure that difficulties, problems, and discord are resolved in a way that promotes reconciliation, understanding, and healing.

In his rule, St. Augustine lays out for the members of his community the way in which interpersonal difficulties are to be resolved. This is what he says, in a paraphrased form:

If you notice in someone of your brothers this fault, of which I am speaking, admonish him at once so that the beginning of evil will not grow more serious but will be promptly corrected.

But if you see him doing the same thing again on some other day, even after your admonition, then whoever had occasion to discover this must report him as he would a wounded man in need of treatment. But let the offense first be pointed out to two or three so that he can be proven guilty on the testimony of these two or three and be punished with due severity. And do not charge yourselves with ill-will when you bring this offense to light. Indeed, yours is the greater blame if you allow your brothers to be lost through your silence when you are able to bring about their correction by your disclosure. If your brother, for example, were suffering a bodily wound that he wanted to hide for fear of undergoing treatment, would it not be cruel of you to remain silent and a mercy on your part to make this known? How much greater then is your obligation to make his condition known lest he continue to suffer a more deadly wound of the soul.

But if he fails to correct the fault despite this admonition, he should first be brought to the attention of the superior before the offense is made known to the others who will have to prove his guilt, in the event he denies the charge. Thus, corrected in private, his fault can perhaps be kept from the others. But should he feign ignorance, the others are to be summoned so that in the presence of all he can be proven guilty, rather than stand accused on the word of one alone. Once proven guilty, he must undergo salutary punishment according to the judgment of the superior having the proper authority.

If he refuses to submit to punishment, he shall be expelled from your brotherhood even if he does not withdraw of his own accord. For this too is not done out of cruelty, but from a sense of compassion so that many others may not be lost through his bad example.

and later:

You should either avoid quarrels altogether or else put an end to them as quickly as possible; otherwise, anger may grow into hatred, making a plank out of a splinter, and turn the soul into a murderer. For so you read: *Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer* (1 Jn 3:15).

Whoever has injured another by open insult, or by abusive or even incriminating language, must remember to repair the injury as quickly as possible by an apology, and he who suffered the injury must also forgive, without further wrangling. But if they have offended one another, they must forgive one another's trespasses for the sake of your prayers which should be recited with greater sincerity each time you repeat them. Although a brother is often tempted to anger, yet prompt to ask pardon from one he admits to having offended, such a one is better than another who, though less given to anger, finds it too hard to ask forgiveness. But a brother who is never willing to ask pardon, or does not do so from his heart, has no reason to be in the monastery, even if he is not expelled. You must then avoid being too harsh in your words, and should they escape your lips, let those same lips not be ashamed to heal the wounds they have caused.

These lines from Augustine make it clear that in the Augustinian community, care should be taken at all times to enact the following values:

1. **Unity**: where possible, difficulties should be resolved, preserving the unity of the community. In this way, the brothers continue to share with each other their search for God, thus helping all members of the community to arrive at their full potential. In the Augustinian community we search for God to find ourselves; we search for ourselves to find God.
2. **Love**: at all times love must be our guiding principle. As brothers of one another and of Jesus Christ we are challenged to love one another, and to forgive one another. While this is always difficult, and sometimes proves to be beyond our capacity, nonetheless, it is the pursuing of this value that distinguishes us as Christians in our dealings with others.
3. **Truth**: if unity and love are thought to be preserved only by ignoring or pretending not to see what is wrong, they are false. At all times we must strive to be true and truthful in our

dealings with others. Truth involves both an accurate assessment of available information, and also an appreciation of the fact that, where there is discord, there are likely to be at least two different ways of looking at that available information.

4. **Dignity**: every one of us, a child of God, is made in God's image and likeness. This is the basis of our fundamental dignity as human beings. In our dealings with one another, and in the way we resolve difficulties between us in the community, we must, at all times, strive to respect the dignity of all parties.

5. **Respect**: this can never be an abstract notion or a theoretical concept. It is not enough to respect the other members of the community, our actions need to express this respect, and our treatment of them should reflect the fact that we respect them, even though they are different, in love.

6. **Faith**: we are the images of God, and the image of God. We are not God. We can never underestimate God's action in our lives, trusting that God continues to work in us, transforming us into more perfect images of God. As St. John says: "My dear friends, we are already God's children, though what we will be hasn't yet been seen. But we do know that when Christ returns, we will be like him, because we will see him as he truly is." (1 Jn 3, 2)

7. **Hope**: the Augustinian community never lives entirely for itself. Our life is to be something that seeks its fulfilment in God and journeys towards this fulfilment by means of the interaction among the brothers and the interaction of the brothers with the wider community. By sharing our search for God our searching for God becomes possible which means that our

community is always a community that is becoming, rather than something which has already been achieved.

Practical Matters/ House Rules:

No community can survive for long if there are not some basic, clear, and consistently-adhered to norms. With this in mind, we remind participants that the following rules are to be observed at all times by all participants, and visitors to the Ostia Community:

1. **Smoking:** the entire premises of the Ostia Community and the adjoining Augustinian property is an area in which smoking is not permitted. This includes any car or vehicle which might be used on any activity of the Community. Smoking is not allowed within ten metres of the premises.
2. **Alcohol:** with the exception of certain celebrations (to be decided by consultation between the Directors and the participants), alcohol is not to be consumed on the premises by either the participants or any visitor they may have invited to the premises.
3. **Drugs:** there is a strict zero tolerance policy with regard to the use of illicit drugs. Anyone found to be using drugs will be asked to leave the community and their guarantor will be informed. Anyone found to be selling, dealing in, or giving drugs to any other person (even when this person is not a member of the Ostia Community) will be immediately reported to the Gardaí as well as being obliged to leave the Community.
4. **Medical and Dietary Requirements:** all participants are to give to the Directors a copy of any medication they are taking, any allergies they have, or any other special medical need. They are also to furnish the Director with the name and contact details of their GP. This information is to be used only in case of there

being an emergency requiring the participant to be taken to hospital where the provision of accurate medical information is necessary to ensure appropriate treatment of the patient. Clear information is to be provided regarding any specific dietary requirements an individual participant may have.

5. **Visitors:** participants are welcome to invite people to visit the community.
Where this invitation is to join the community in a common act, the consent of the Directors must be sought beforehand. No visitors are permitted to stay overnight in the premises. Visitors must leave the building by 10pm unless the Directors have given prior consent to them remaining until after this time.
The Directors reserve the right to ask any visitor to leave at any time and also the right to ban any visitor from returning to visit the premises.
6. **Cars/ Vehicles/ Bicycles:** participants are not allowed to bring cars to the premises with the sole exception of this being for loading and unloading. Motorbikes, and/or similar vehicles, are not allowed on the premises. Parking is reserved for the Augustinians. When a participant is being visited by someone who has travelled by car, if possible, and with adequate notice, we will try to accommodate the vehicle. A secure place for storing bicycles is provided for use only by members of the community and/ or members of staff.
7. **Programme:** all participants are to participate in all common acts as laid down in the "Programme Template" unless they are dispensed from this obligation by one of the Directors, and only for a serious reason.
8. **Rent:** €450 per month per participant is to be paid promptly and in advance.

Rent is due on the last day of the previous month. As well as accommodation this rent will include a light breakfast each day which residents will prepare for themselves, and an evening meal on two evenings of the week which will be prepared by the *Bean a Tí* of the Ostia Community.

On other evenings a meal will be provided for those who have booked in for it. This meal is only available at the mealtime - food will not be put aside for a resident to eat later.

Other food will be made available on a weekly basis. This will consist in a limited supply of biscuits, fruit, preserves etc. This food is made available with the clear understanding that this food is for shared consumption by all members of the community, and not just for individuals.

Individual participants will be provided with a space where their own particular foodstuffs can be stored -within reason. Cooking facilities are available to residents but priority is to be given at all times to the *Bean a Tí*

9. **Deposit:** at the beginning of the year a deposit of €500 is to be left with the Directors - this will be returned at the end of the year. If the participant has caused damage to the property the deposit will be forfeited.

10. **Insurance:** all participants will be covered by the Public Liability Insurance of the Augustinians. It is suggested that participants also purchase their own insurance separately. The Ostia Community cannot recommend any particular insurance company.

Template of Activities of Ostia Community

This document offers only a skeleton sketch of the structure of the week for participants in the Ostia Community project - specific activities, times etc may vary depending on what is going on.

Common acts, at which all participants must be present, are featured in the following table in **red**.

Two participants will remain in Limerick each weekend and will be active in the ministry of the Augustinian Church in Limerick.

Prayer:

Prayer forms an important element of the life of the Ostia Community. Participants will be encouraged, and assisted, in developing their own personal prayer life.

Common prayer times are obligatory for all participants - it is part of our commitment to the Project, and to one another.

Those who are remaining in Limerick for the weekend are expected to attend Sunday Mass in the Augustinian Church.

As well as these "fixed" activities, participants will be invited to participate in other activities in the church should they wish to do so.

All participants will be encouraged to take the opportunity to engage in personal prayer. Guidance is available for any resident interested in this.

Other Activities:

There will be a Community Meeting once a week - day to be fixed when everyone knows their schedule. This meeting will provide the opportunity for any issues that have arisen to be addressed.

Occasional outings for all or some of the participants will be organised to encourage participation in the cultural life of the city.

Meals:

A limited breakfast will be provided: Tea, Coffee, Bread, Butter. Participants will be provided with space to store any individual items they may require with regard to food.

A certain amount of fruit will also be provided.

Normally, lunch will not be provided.

The evening meal will be provided at a fixed time - those who are not there will have to make their own arrangements. All participants must clearly indicate whether or not they will be there for the evening meal by, at the latest, 10am on the day concerned. This evening meal will be a light meal - it is anticipated that participants will have their main meal while in College.

While, at all times, efforts will be made to ensure that the food provided is both appetising and nutritious, and menus will be agreed with the participants, we cannot guarantee that everyone will always have individual tastes catered for, except in the case of particular dietary requirements.

Studies:

The primary focus of any University student has to be their studies. With this in mind, the Directors will offer the participants in the Ostia Community whatever assistance they can. This may take the form of some of the following:

1. Organising study seminars focusing on how to study effectively.
2. Sharing academic experience and tips with regard to writing and completing assignments.
3. Being available to participants to discuss issues of any sort that may arise.

4. Putting participants in touch with various services and supports that may be necessary on an individual basis.
5. Providing a bridge between the Ostia Community and the Chaplaincy services in the College/ University that the student is attending.
6. Ensuring that the physical environment is one in which study is possible (monitoring noise, providing broadband WIFI, etc.)

Community Timetable:

(Bear in mind that this is a sample timetable. Times and days may vary depending on the commitments of members of the community)

Sunday: For those remaining for the weekend	Morning	Activity in the church - probably around the sacred space area Lunch with Augustinian community Afternoon free
Sunday:	8pm	Evening Prayer Shared discussion about how the weekend went for everyone Followed by a "pizza night"
Monday	8am 6.30pm 10pm	Breakfast, then off to college Evening Meal Night Prayer (Optional)
Tuesday	8am 6.30pm 10pm	Breakfast, then off to college Evening Meal Night Prayer (Optional)
Wednesday	8am 6.30pm 10pm	Breakfast, then off to college Evening Prayer - for everyone
Thursday	8am 6.30pm 10pm	Breakfast, then off to college Evening Meal Night Prayer (Optional)
Friday	8am 6pm 10pm	Breakfast, then off to college Evening Meal Departure of those leaving for the weekend Night Prayer (Optional)

Saturday (for those remaining on the project)	Morning	Shopping and Cleaning
	Afternoon	Lunch with Augustinian Community Preparing of Sacred Space in church Free time

Admissions Policy - OSTIA COMMUNITY

(The Project)

Preamble:

This policy aims to ensure that appropriate procedures are in place to enable the Ostia Community, and those responsible for it:

- a. To make decisions on all applications in a fair and consistent manner consistent with the Ethos and Spirituality of the Augustinian Order and its Charitable Goals and Objectives.
- b. To make an accurate and appropriate assessment of the capacity of the project to cater for the needs of applicants in the light of the resources available to it.
- c. To put in place a framework which will ensure effective and productive relations between Participants, Directors, and Staff where an applicant is admitted to the project.

Introduction

The Ostia Community is a project of the Irish Province of Augustinians, a Roman Catholic Religious Order and wishes to consider only:

- i. Applicants who are in agreement with the aims and philosophy of the project.

ii. Applicants whose contact with members of the Order shows that they are well motivated, willing to adapt to the norms of the community, and who are open to developing their faith in God.

iii. Applicants who are male (in keeping with the profile of the Irish Province of Augustinians and also taking account of the physical limitations of the premises available to the Project)

It is expected that an application to participate in the Ostia Community indicates an agreement to participate in all activities of the community.

All those applying to join the Ostia Community will be deemed to have read all the information set out in this document, and to abide by it.

Similarly, it will be deemed that all those presenting themselves as guarantors for the participants will have read all the information in this document and will have agreed to abide by it.

The Directors of the Ostia Community retain the right to restrict intake to a number below the physical capacity of the building occupied by the project if they consider that an applicant is unlikely to benefit from/ be able to participate fully in the programme or if they consider that the admission of some participants would be detrimental to the interests of those participants or to those currently participating in the Project or to prospective participants.

Participants with specific needs will be catered for insofar as possible, within the limitations of the physical building and the resources available.

Criteria for Admission:

- A. Candidates for the Community will, normally, have displayed an interest in their faith, in the life, work and spirituality of the Augustinians, and in living out the Gospel values of Truth, Unity, and Love.
- B. Candidates will be expected to live as a community striving to express these values in concrete ways by the manner in which they share their faith and their lives together.
- C. Candidates will be expected to commit to the rhythm of the life of the Community for the period of One Academic Year.

In the selection process, priority will be given to those applicants who have a significant involvement with the Augustinians.

Requirements:

1. The number of participants in the OSTIA Community will be determined by the Director, in consultation with the Board of Management of the Ostia Community (BOM), and with the Provincial and Provincial Council of the Irish Province of Augustinians.
2. All applicants will be interviewed prior to being offered a place in the project.
3. The Directors reserve the right to limit the number of participants to less than 6, if they deem it appropriate.
4. In the event of an applicant not being offered a place **due to over subscription**, the applicant will be placed on a waiting list. If a place subsequently becomes available before the academic year begins the Directors of the project may offer the applicant a place on the project.

5. All participants will be male, in keeping with the nature of the Irish Province of Augustinians.
6. All participants will be at least 18 years old by the 1st of August of the year in which they hope to participate in the project. If a participant is under 18 at the time of their application their parent/ guardian must indicate their consent on the application form.
7. Participants will, normally, be baptised Roman Catholics.
8. All participants will have completed secondary education and will normally be expected to be university students during their time in the community.
9. Application to join the community is to be made by means of the completed Application Form which should be sent to:
The Director of the OSTIA Community,
Augustinian Lane
Thomas Street
Limerick
V94 DA29

Written applications should be made by the last day of April of the year in which the applicant hopes to participate in the Community.

10. Each application should include:
 - a. Completed Application Form (Available on Request)
 - b. Two recent passport photos
 - c. The name of the course/ courses the applicant will be pursuing while in university.
11. Each applicant will provide a letter from their General Practitioner stating that they are medically fit to participate

in the project, including the applicant's suitability to travel overseas on a mission experience.

12. Each applicant will be expected abide by the Child Protection Policy of the Irish Augustinians at all times
13. Places in the Community are limited and will be offered on the basis of those judged by the Director, the Provincial and Council, to be most likely to benefit from the experience.
14. Students in the two Irish Augustinian Schools will be offered places in the Community but places will not be reserved for them.
15. The application process is not public and all decisions are reserved to the Director, the Provincial, and Provincial Council.
16. Siblings: where the brother of a previous participant is applying to participate on his own behalf he should state the name of his brother and the year(s) he participated in the project. Having had a brother who participated in the project should not be taken as any indication that other siblings will be automatically accepted in to the project.
17. In all cases offers of places on the project will be made on the basis of the Directors' decision regarding:
 - a) The suitability of the candidate
 - b) The likelihood of the candidate being able to benefit from the project.
 - c) The candidate's understanding of the project and willingness to participate in all aspects of it.

18. Places in the Ostia Community are not offered on a "first come first served" basis.
19. Any applicant wishing to appeal a decision made by the Directors in this regard may do so in writing, within one month of the decision having been communicated.

Admissions Procedure

1. Having consulted this website, applicants will be invited to visit the home of the Ostia Community in Limerick.
2. Having visited the home of the Ostia Community the prospective participant may be invited to fill in an Application Form, and submit it.
3. The Board of Management of the Ostia Community, having received the application forms, will engage in a selection process and may invite some candidates to present themselves for interview.
4. Applicants will be informed as soon as possible after the interview regarding their acceptance in to the programme, or otherwise.

Dealing with Difficulties: Grievance and Disciplinary Procedure

In the Ostia Community we aim to foster a positive attitude to personal responsibility and behaviour by means of the living out of the General Principles listed above. Our primary goal is to encourage participants to consider what they should do as part of their moral and ethical development. There are a range of means in which positive behaviour and achievement both within and beyond the precincts of the Project are recognised. These include interaction

with the community of professed Augustinians, involvement with the church community, commitment to common activities, willingness to help out, flexibility in dealing with others, responsibility for the care and cleanliness of accommodation area, etc.

In the daily routine of the Ostia Community, participants can achieve high standards for themselves and make a positive contribution to the community in a variety of ways.

Some examples are:

1. Assisting other members of the community.
2. Punctuality when attending common acts
3. Responsibility regarding attendance at University lectures and studying
4. Using gifts/ talents for the enrichment of the community
5. Valuing and respecting themselves and others
6. Maintaining a high standard of cleanliness and hygiene at all times.

The expectations of the Augustinians, the Directors of the Ostia Community, and all those responsible for the organisation of the Project is that the General Principles outlined above will be a guiding light for the behaviour of all participants.

In the light of these principles we want to make it clear that we reject bullying in all its forms. We commit ourselves to doing what we can to address it should it arise and to do what is possible to overcome the hurt caused by it.

Bearing this in mind all those involved in the Ostia Community must be cognisant of, and committed to, the following Anti-Bullying Policy

Anti-Bullying Policy

Bullying is to be defined as:

Unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted, by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.¹

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- Deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying
- Cyber bullying
- Identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying or any bullying relating to ethnicity or skin colour.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the *General Principles of the Code of Behaviour of the Ostia Community*.

However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the *Project's Code of Behaviour*.

The Directors and the Patron of the Ostia Community recognise the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of those who are victims of it. They are, therefore, fully committed to the following key actions of best practice in

¹ This definition is based on the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*, published by the Department of Education in *Circular 0045/ 2013*

preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

1. Creating a positive culture and climate which is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity.
2. Encouraging participants to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment.
3. Promoting respectful relationships among all members of the Ostia Community.
4. Providing effective leadership for the Community.
5. Establishing by means of this policy a shared understanding of what bullying is, and of the impact it can have.
6. Promoting awareness about these matters and building empathy, respect, and resilience among all members of the Community.
7. Providing effective supervision and monitoring of the interaction between members of the Community by means of individual meetings with participants and also by group meetings.
8. Being consistent in recording, investigating, and following-up on complaints or reports relating to bullying.