



## Anti-Bullying Policy

In accordance with the requirements of the Education Welfare Act (2000) and the *code of behaviour guidelines* issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of St. Colmcille's S.N.S., Kells, Co. Meath has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* which were published in September 2013.

The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

### **A positive school culture and climate which :**

- is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
- encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment;
- promotes respectful relationships across the school community;

### **Key elements of a positive school culture and climate:**

The school acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment.

- The school acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual and his/her worth as a human being.
- The school promotes positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility.
- The school prohibits vulgar, offensive, sectarian or other aggressive behaviour or language.
- The school has a clear commitment to promoting equity in general and gender equity in particular in all aspects.
- The school has the capacity to change in response to pupils' needs.
- The school identifies aspects of curriculum through which positive and lasting influences can be exerted towards forming pupils' attitudes and values.
- The school takes particular care of "at risk" pupils and uses its monitoring systems to facilitate early intervention where necessary and it responds to the needs, fears or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner.
- The school recognises the need to work in partnership with and keep parents informed on procedures to improve relationships on a school-wide basis.

- The school recognises the role of parents in equipping the pupil with a range of life skills. The school recognises the role of other community agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying.
- The school promotes habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the interdependence of people in groups and communities.
- The school promotes qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among all its members both in school and out of school.
- Staff members share a collegiate responsibility, under the direction of the Principal, to act in preventing bullying/aggressive behaviour by any member of the school community. Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate
- Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.
- Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.
- Catch them being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN.
- Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are ignored.
- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.
- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media. Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use.
- Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules. Actively involve parents and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media.
- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school. Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.
- All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour. Ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.

### **Effective leadership**

The principal and other leaders in the school, including all teachers and S.N.A's, will strive to encourage an ethos under which bullying is unacceptable.

- Practical steps are taken to challenge and respond to bullying. The principal will involve both staff and pupils in developing and implementing a vision of the school where diversity is accepted and celebrated.
- The principal and other leaders in the school, including all teachers and SNA's act as good role-models.

### **School-wide approach**

- A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.
- The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities.
- Pupils will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils. This policy will be available on the school website.
- The implementation of regular whole school awareness measures in the school and classrooms on the promotion of friendship, and bullying prevention.
- Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.:
  - Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
  - Parent make a phone call to the school.
  - Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
  - Administer a confidential questionnaire once a year to all pupils.
- Identify clear protocols to encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied.
- The development of an Acceptable Use Policy in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored, as is the pupils' use of mobile phones.

### **A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact**

All members of the school staff should have a shared understanding of what constitutes bullying behaviour as outlined in our school policy.

From time to time, time may be taken to discuss bullying at staff meetings or guest speakers may be invited to speak with staff.

### Examples of bullying behaviours

<p><b>General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc.</li> <li>• Physical aggression</li> <li>• Damage to property</li> <li>• Name calling</li> <li>• Slagging</li> <li>• The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person</li> <li>• Offensive graffiti</li> <li>• Extortion</li> <li>• Intimidation</li> <li>• Insulting or offensive gestures</li> <li>• The “look”</li> <li>• Invasion of personal space</li> <li>• A combination of any of the types listed.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cyber</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Denigration:</b> Spreading rumors, lies or gossip to hurt a person’s reputation</li> <li>• <b>Harassment:</b> Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual</li> <li>• <b>Impersonation:</b> Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person’s name</li> <li>• <b>Flaming:</b> Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight</li> <li>• <b>Trickery:</b> Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online</li> <li>• <b>Outing:</b> Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images</li> <li>• <b>Exclusion:</b> Purposefully excluding someone from an online group</li> <li>• <b>Cyber stalking:</b> Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety</li> <li>• Silent telephone/mobile phone call</li> <li>• Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls</li> <li>• Abusive text messages</li> <li>• Abusive email</li> <li>• Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/ Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles</li> <li>• Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures</li> <li>• Abusive posts on any form of communication technology</li> </ul>
<p><b>Identity Based Behaviours</b>  <b>Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation</b> (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).</p>	
<p><b>Homophobic and Transgender</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spreading rumours about a person’s sexual orientation</li> <li>• Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation</li> <li>• Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian...used in a derogatory manner</li> <li>• Physical intimidation or attacks</li> <li>• Threats</li> </ul>

<b>Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background</li> <li>• Exclusion on the basis of any of the above</li> </ul>
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<b>Relational</b>	<p>This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Malicious gossip</li> <li>• Isolation &amp; exclusion</li> <li>• Ignoring</li> <li>• Excluding from the group</li> <li>• Taking someone's friends away</li> <li>• "Bitching"</li> <li>• Spreading rumours</li> <li>• Breaking confidence</li> <li>• Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear</li> <li>• The "look"</li> <li>• Use or terminology such as 'nerd' in a derogatory way</li> </ul>
<b>Sexual</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching</li> <li>• Harassment</li> </ul>
<b>Special Educational Needs, Disability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name calling</li> <li>• Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs</li> <li>• Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying</li> <li>• Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues.</li> <li>• Mimicking a person's disability</li> <li>• Setting others up for ridicule</li> </ul>

**The following signs and symptoms may suggest that a pupil is being bullied:**

- Anxiety about travelling to and from school e.g. requesting parents to drive or collect him/her.
- Sudden unwillingness to go to school or refusal to attend.
- Deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school.
- Patterns of physical illnesses e.g. headaches, stomach aches; o
- Unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour which may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or more especially after longer school holidays.

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

### **Implementation of curricula**

The full implementation of the SPHE curriculum, using the RSE, Walk Tall and Stay Safe and weaving well-being programmes as supports.

The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.

### **Established intervention strategies**

- Interview/conferencing with all pupils
- Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process
- Communicating with parent(s)/guardian(s) to support school interventions.
- No Blame Approach

### **Links to other policies**

Other policies that are particularly relevant to bullying are Code of Behaviour, Child Protection policy, Supervision of pupils, Acceptable Use policy, Attendance.

### **The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:**

Mary Corcoran (School Principal / D.L.P)

Louise Carey (Deputy Principal / D.D.L.P)

All Teaching Staff, with the support of SNA's will investigate and record incidents of bullying behaviour.

### **Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils:**

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

### **Supports for staff**

Members of the school staff have sufficient familiarity with the school's anti-bullying policy to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy when required and enable the staff to recognise bullying, implement effective strategies for preventing bullying and where appropriate, intervene in bullying cases.

Temporary and substitute staff should have sufficient awareness of the school's code of behaviour and its anti-bullying policy.

A copy of the policy can be requested from the office and is available to teachers on the school website.

Staff have access to the Weaving-Wellbeing, Walk Tall and Stay Safe Teacher resources which cover topics relating to self-esteem, bullying and telling an adult who pupil's trust.

From time to time, guest speakers and Continuing Professional Development talks on Bullying, the Stay Safe Programme and the Walk Tall programme, may be invited to speak with the school staff.

**The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame);**

### **Reporting bullying behaviour**

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher/principal.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;

### **Investigating and dealing with incidents:**

Teacher speaks to the parties involved to determine whether bullying has occurred:

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the (relevant)teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.
- Where possible incidents should be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved. It may be necessary to interview a child individually.
- All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way.
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
- If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group if necessary.
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after the interview by the teacher.  
It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s).

### **When bullying behaviour has been determined:**

In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred details of the incident will be recorded on the Aladdin system by the teacher.

If a pupil or pupils are recorded for a second time for bullying behaviour, the 2<sup>nd</sup> incident will be recorded on the Aladdin system and the principal will be informed.

The principal, will speak to the relevant parties in an effort to resolve the issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

Parents /Guardians will be contacted.

The principal will keep the class teacher updated, adding any necessary information (sanctions given, phone calls or meetings with parents /guardians) to the record on Aladdin.

Where a serious incident of bullying behaviour has been determined or a pupil has been consistently involved in bullying (3 recorded incidents) the principal will bring the matter to the attention of The B.O.M.

**Incidents of serious bullying behaviour will be brought to the immediate attention of the principal.**

**In cases of serious instances of bullying where the behaviour is regarded as possibly abusive, a referral will be made to Tusla and/or An Garda Síochána.**

### **Follow up and recording**

In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:

- Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased.
- Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable.
- Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable.
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved can be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.
- Where a parent(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
- In the event that a parent(s)/guardian(s) has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

### **Prevention of Harassment**

The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligation under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of pupils or staff or the harassment of pupils or staff on any of the nine grounds

specified i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_ [date].

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Chairperson of Board of Management) (Principal)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of next review: \_\_\_\_\_