

Coláiste/Gaelcholáiste Choilm

Anti-Bullying Policy April 2014

1. 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 Coláiste Choilm 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.

2. The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils. It 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; and
 - promotes respectful relationships across the school community
- Effective leadership
- A school-wide approach
- A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that:
 - build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
 - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils
- Supports for staff
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

3. In accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* bullying is defined as follows:

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

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 and
- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

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 school's code of behaviour.

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 school's code of behaviour. Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

- 4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows: (see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools): In the case where a student(s) is being bullied, he/she should be able to approach any of the following people.**

- A Mentor
- Class Tutor
- Year Head
- Guidance Counsellor
- Any member of staff with whom the student feels comfortable
- A member of the Pastoral Care Team
- Deputy Principal
- Principal

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows (see Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

The policy addresses bullying behaviour, harassment and sexual harassment. While it primarily addresses issues related to bullying of students, it applies also to teaching and other school staff, parents/guardians and others in so far as measures under the policy relate to them.

The policy applies:

- During school time (including breaks)
- Going to and from school
- During school tours
- During extra curricular activities
- In respect of bullying that occurs at a location, activity, function, or programme that is not school related if it is in the opinion of the principal and/or Board Of Management that alleged bullying has created a hostile environment at school for the victim, has infringed on the rights of the victim at the school and/or has materially or substantially disrupted the education process or the orderly operation of the school.

Bullying Education Programme

It is school policy to provide education on bullying in the following manner:

- All year groups are facilitated through the S.P.H.E. (Social, Personal and Health Education) programme in Junior Cycle and Transition year and through RSE at Senior Cycle, which incorporates bullying information and learning.
- An Anti-Bullying Week which incorporates identity based bullying awareness and cyber bullying awareness will take place on an annual basis.
- A Meitheal leadership programme where fifth year students mentor first year classes
- Resilience Programme
- Staff meetings/staff memo
- As part of ongoing continuous professional development of staff
- Pastoral Care Team meetings
- Senior Management meetings
- Year Head and Tutor meetings
- Student Dialann contains an anti-bullying charter, highlighted by Tutors each September and signed by students
- Wide ranging extra-curricular programmes to develop self-esteem

- Visiting speakers
- Drama workshops
- Displaying anti-bullying posters, including those that students themselves have made to ensure that students feel involved and thereby committed to preventing bullying behaviour.
- Teachers have a very strong influence on students: by their attitudes to bullying behaviour, by modelling appropriate behaviour, by behaving positively and by providing students with the opportunities to participate in a wide range of curricular and extra-curricular activities e.g. in English there is a wide range of literature available which can be used to facilitate discussion. Other examples include the use of drama to increase students' empathy with victims of bullying. Co-operation and group enterprise can be promoted through the involvement in team sports and societies
- Invited guest speakers
- Student assemblies where awareness is raised

Links to other policies and curriculum delivery:

This policy is consistent with other policies in Coláiste/Gaelcholáiste Choilm;

- Code of Behaviour
- Child Protection
- Internet Safety: Acceptable Use Policy
- Health and Safety
- SPHE/RSE
- Guidance
- Learning Support
- Admissions
- Dignity in the Workplace

This policy links to the following Curriculum areas:

- SPHE: The issue of Bullying is dealt with in each of the three years of Junior Cycle and Transition Year
- RSE
- Anti-Bullying Lessons could be taught by subject teachers during Anti-Bullying Week e.g. CSPE (Human Rights)

Other links could include:

- Transition Year
- LCA
- Tutor time
- Weekly assembly

6. The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*) :

Procedures for Dealing with Incidences of Bullying

Incidents of bullying behaviour will be dealt with *by the following steps*:

- Appropriate personnel will interview all of the students involved in a bullying incident.
- The alleged victim and alleged perpetrator(s) of the incident will be spoken to and encouraged to solve the problem.
- The alleged victim and perpetrator(s) will be invited to write down any relevant details.
- All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils involved.
- Records will be kept of all incidents and of the procedures that were followed.
- Appropriate personnel will monitor progress of students involved in a bullying incident.
- Where the incident is deemed to be minor, a verbal warning will be given to the bully to stop the inappropriate behaviour, pointing out how he/she is in breach of the Code of Behaviour and trying to get him/her to see the situation from the victim's point of view. If deemed appropriate, parents may be contacted.

- If the behaviour persists, the Year Head and the parents/guardians of the victims and bullies will be informed. Thus, they will be given the opportunity of discussing the matter and will be in a position to help and support their children before a crisis may occur. Appropriate sanctions will be imposed, in accordance with both the Code of Behaviour and the Anti Bullying policy.

- If there is a serious incident, the matter should be reported to the Deputy Principal or Principal, parents will be involved and appropriate sanctions applied.

- Where the incident is deemed to be more serious or on-going (e.g. gross misbehaviour), the Principal should be informed immediately and the Principal will inform the Board of Management, if necessary.

Teachers must record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances and report to the principal:

- a) In cases where he/she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred; and
- b) Where the school has decided as part of its anti-bullying policy that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to school management as applicable.

Sanctions

The following may be deemed appropriate:

- Verbal Reprimand
- Informal/ formal detention(s) instead of lunchtime
- Issue a break-time monitoring card, to ensure a student remains in their designated area during lunchtimes
- Issue behaviour/probation card as deemed appropriate
- Withdrawal of privileges
- Other sanctions stipulated in the Code of Behaviour

Interventions and Strategies

The interventions and strategies enforced will depend on the specific nature of the bullying incident.

The following may be deemed appropriate;

- Offenders and victims of bullying may be referred to the Guidance Counsellor or to the Chaplain
- Reconciliation may be facilitated, through the process of mediation
- Restorative Practice may be encouraged i.e. try to get those involved to see the situation from the victim's point of view
- Students will be encouraged to adopt a positive attitude regarding their future behaviour
- A contract of good behaviour may be drawn up
- Adjustment of the class-seating plan
- Change of base class
- The involvement of external agencies may be deemed necessary
- Encouraging resilience

School management will ensure that sufficient supervision is given at break times in order to reduce the risk of a bullying incident occurring.

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*) :

The following support may be deemed appropriate:

- The victim and the offender will receive the utmost privacy and confidentiality in all investigations. They may be referred to the Guidance Counsellor, Chaplain, or member of the Pastoral Care Team as deemed appropriate.
- The school will address the attitudes of bullying within the school community through the curriculum, extra curricular activities and Anti-Bullying Week.
- In a case where sanctions need to be imposed, they will be enforced, as per the school's Code of Behaviour.
- Student may be offered to take part in the schools resilience programme.
- Following an investigated incident of bullying, subject teachers, class tutors, year heads, members of the Pastoral Care Team and break time supervisors will monitor the behaviour of the students involved.
- Parents or Guardians will be informed of serious incidents and if necessary they may be required to join in the restorative based approach to solving the issue. A referral system will be in place to ensure all incidents will be dealt with thoroughly.

8. 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.

9. Prevention of Harassment

The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations 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.

10. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____ [date].

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

12. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, be otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents'

Association (where one exists). A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: _____
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _____
(Principal)

Date: _____

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____