Non Scholae Sed Vitae Discimus

Scoil An Chuileannaigh

Following a review with all relevant partners, this updated Policy was ratified by the Board of Management on November 23rd 2021 and was presented to the staff for immediate implementation on December 1st 2021

Anti-Bullying policy

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 Cullina National School 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 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; 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.

Types of bullying

The following are some of the types of bullying behaviour that can occur amongst pupils:

Physical aggression:

This behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While pupils often engage in 'mess fights', they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.

Intimidation:

Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation: it may be based on the use of very aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon. Particularly upsetting can be a facial expression which conveys aggression and/or dislike.

Isolation/exclusion and other relational bullying:

This occurs where a certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or all of the class group. This practice is usually initiated by the person engaged in bullying behaviour and can be difficult to detect. It may be accompanied by writing insulting remarks about the pupil in public places, by passing around notes about or drawings of the pupil or by whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard. Relational bullying occurs when a person's attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. One of the most common forms includes control: "Do this or I won't be your friend anymore"(implied or stated); a group ganging up against one person (girl or boy); non-verbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumours about a person or giving them the "silent treatment".

Cyber-bullying:

This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, e-mail, instant messaging, apps, gaming sites, chat-rooms and other online technologies. Being the target of inappropriate or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying. As cyber-bullying uses technology to perpetrate bullying behaviour and does not require face to face contact, cyber-bullying can occur at any time (day or night). Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyber-bullying. For example, a target may be sent homophobic text messages or pictures may be posted with negative comments about a person's sexuality, appearance etc.

Name calling:

Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) which hurt, insults or humiliates should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name-calling of this type refers to physical appearance, e.g., size of clothes worn. Accent or distinctive voice characteristics may attract negative attention. Academic ability can also provoke name calling. This tends to operate at two extremes. There are those who are singled out for attention because they are perceived to be weak academically. At the other extreme there are those who, because they are perceived as high achievers, are also targeted.

Damage to property:

Personal property can be the focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, school books and other learning material or interference with a pupil's locker or bicycle. The contents of school bags

and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.

Extortion:

Demands for money may be made, often accompanied by threats (sometimes carried out in the event of the targeted pupil not delivering on the demand). A pupil may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to another who is engaged in bullying behaviour.

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

All Class Teachers

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

- The anti-bullying module of the SPHE programme as it applies during each school year

  - Developing a climate that encourages the disclosure of bullying behaviour.

  - An annual anti-bullying/friendship week

- At least five awareness-raising exercises per school year for each class group pro-actively explaining the nature and variety, causes, consequences and unacceptability of bullying.
  - Pupils are helped to examine the issue of bullying in a calm rational way, outside of the tense context of particular bullying incidents. In the process they are made more aware of the nature of bullying and the various forms that it can take.
  - Pupils are made aware that the consequences of bullying behaviour are always bad for those who are targeted, even if this is not always obvious at the time.
  - Pupils are encouraged to recognise, reject and report bullying behaviour, either spontaneously or through questionnaires that are regularly used in the school.

  - Through presentations and newsletters, the school staff and parents are made aware of the nature of bullying and the signs that might indicate that a pupil is being bullied. They are encouraged to be vigilant in watching out for signs of bullying and to report any suspicion of bullying they may have to the "Relevant Teacher"

  - Collaboration with local agencies

6. When investigating and dealing with bullying the primary aim of Cullina National School will be to resolve any issues and to restore, as much as possible, the relationships of the parties involved.

In Cullina National School each teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement, following detailed investigation, to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.

All reports anonymous and otherwise will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any staff member in the school.
- All school staff will make it clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be 'telling tales' but are behaving responsibly. By nurturing this, Cullina National School will encourage the children to be confident in 'telling' relevant adults.
- All staff will report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher (the class teacher).
- Parents and pupils of Cullina National School will be required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues. Cullina National School will inform each set of pupils and parents of the above approach from the outset.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.

Investigating procedure -

1. The class teacher will complete the Disclosures Template and inform the Principal of the allegation
2. The Class teacher will notify their colleagues of the allegation so that observed and relevant incidents can be reported to the relevant teacher
3. Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents;
4. Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
5. 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;
6. 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;
7. If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements;
8. Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face them from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher;

9. It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s);

10. In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken. The school should give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils;

11. Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;

12. It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school;

13. Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should 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. This can have a therapeutic effect.

14. In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded by the relevant teacher in the recording template at *Appendix 3* of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2013*

15. 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; and

  ⬥ Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the School Principal or Deputy Principal;

16. Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures;

17. In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

7.   The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as   follows:

- Bullied pupils:
  - Ending the bullying behaviour,
  - Changing the school culture to foster more respect for bullied pupils and all pupils,
  - Changing the school culture to foster greater empathy towards and support for bullied pupils,
  - Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the awareness-raising programme,
  - Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the speedy identification of those responsible and speedy resolution of bullying situations,
  - After resolution, enabling bullied pupils to complete a victim-impact statement,
  - Making adequate counselling facilities available to pupils who need it in a timely manner,
  - Helping bullied pupils raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school).
- Bullying pupils:
  - Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are not blamed or punished and get a "clean sheet,"
  - Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are doing the right and honourable thing and giving them praise for this,
  - Making adequate counselling facilities available to help those who need it learn other ways of meeting their needs besides violating the rights of others,
  - Helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school),

8.   Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils

The Board of Management of Cullina National School 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 reviewed/updated policy was adopted by the Board of Management of Cullina National School on November 21st, 2021

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. 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 and provided to the Parents' Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: *Paul Neary*
Paul Neary (Chairman)   **Date: 21/11/2021**

Signed: *Leona Twiss*
Leona Twiss (Principal)   **Date: 21/11/2021**

Checklist to be reviewed annually
Policy to be reviewed in 2024