



# Anti-Bullying Policy



AN ROINN  
OIDEACHAIS AGUS SCILEANNA

DEPARTMENT OF  
EDUCATION AND SKILLS



## Introduction

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.Colman's N.S. 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.

## Aim

St. Colman's aim is that bullying is **Recognised, Rejected and Reported by all members of the school community and that where bullying has taken place the emphasis is on Resolution not Blame.** This approach consistently implemented is recognised as leading to the best outcomes in incidents of bullying behaviour.

## Definition

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*

## Vision

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
  - ✓ 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.

## Prevention Strategies

The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and trans-phobic bullying) that will be used by St. Colman's N.S. are as follows (see Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

- A culture of respect, responsibility, encouragement, positivity, support, enabling, consideration and tolerance for all within the school is encouraged throughout every school day.
- Supervision of pupils during the school day and at school events with particular attention given to SEN pupils and pupils where there is a concern.
- The encouragement of empathy, respect and resilience amongst pupils.
- Provide pupils with opportunities to develop a positive sense of worth.
- Develop pupils' awareness and understanding of bullying and how the school deals with bullying including its causes and effects to include where age appropriate cyber bullying, identity based bullying, homophobic/transphobic bullying.
- Education of pupils, where age appropriate, on appropriate online behaviour.
- Close supervision of access and use of technology in school.
- Development of social skills and inclusion amongst pupils particularly focusing on those children with SEN.

- Bullying to be discussed formally at regular intervals by staff but at a minimum at one staff meeting per year.
- A bullying awareness week as part of our social skills month.
- Use of curricular programmes such as The Stay Safe programme, RSE curriculum and SPHE curriculum which are particularly relevant to the prevention of bullying and the promotion of respect for diversity and inclusiveness as well as the inter-related areas of belonging, integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships.
- Respect is fostered across all curriculum areas and in all teaching and curricular opportunities, are used to promote the value of diversity, to address prejudice and stereotyping and to highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour. Co-operation and group enterprise are particularly encouraged through school activities and all pupils are encouraged to participate in the wide variety offered throughout the school year.
- The provision of large areas for play and sporting activities both during and after school help to engage pupils in positive behaviour and provide opportunities for pupils to channel their energies and learn how to control their aggression.

### Dealing with incidents

The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows: (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

<u>Place of the Incident</u>	<u>Relevant teacher to deal with incident</u>
Classroom related incidents	Classroom teacher
Yard incidents	The supervising teacher. Account of the incident may then be reported by the supervising teacher to the classroom teacher and/or principal/deputy principal depending on the severity of the incident
Incidents at school events	The supervising teacher. Account of the incident may then be reported by the supervising teacher to the classroom teacher and/or principal/deputy principal depending on the severity of the incident

## Procedures

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*):

St. Colman's N.S. has a clear and consistent approach to dealing with reports of bullying.

1. **Where a parent or staff member has a bullying concern** it should be brought to the attention of the relevant teacher.
  - For parents or staff members this should be done through **arranging a meeting with the teacher**. Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible.
  - In meeting with a staff member or parent who has a bullying concern, teachers will take a calm, unemotional problem solving approach. The relevant teacher will:
    - ✓ **Listen to the concern,**
    - ✓ **Explain to parent/staff member that the school can monitor or investigate their concern and explain the difference.**
    - ✓ **The teacher will remind all parents/staff involved in a bullying concern that the primary aim of the school 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 apportioning blame.**
    - ✓ **The teacher will outline to all parties how they will investigate the concern ie. By checking class/yard behaviour logs, speaking with other staff members, including children on close monitoring list, speaking with children involved individually at first and if deemed necessary or appropriate by them collectively.**
    - ✓ **The teacher will arrange to meet all parties involved separately on conclusion of the investigation.**
2. **Where a child voices a concern of being bullied to a staff member the following procedure will apply:**
  - The staff member will pass the concern onto the relevant class teacher or in their absence the deputy principal or principal.
  - The relevant teacher will arrange to meet the child outside of normal class and listen to their concern. The teacher will take a note of the concern. If in the teacher's professional judgement there is a need to investigate they will ask the child where age appropriate to write down their account of the incident. The teacher will then arrange to meet with the other parties named by the child outside of class. If more than one child is named these children will be met individually and afterwards as a group if required. The teacher will note their response and ask them to write down their account of the incident.

- After this initial investigation the teacher will decide the most appropriate course of action to resolve the situation. This may include advising the children involved regarding appropriate interactions and behaviour expected in the school, monitoring the children involved or raising the concern with other staff.
  - If the teacher believes that bullying is taking place they will inform the parents of all children involved, explain the actions being taken and seek their assistance in resolving the situation.
3. Where the relevant **teacher has determined that a pupil had engaged in bullying behaviour**, it will be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and Code of Behaviour and efforts will be made to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
  4. The **teacher will make clear to all parties 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.**
  5. 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;
  6. **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.**
  7. 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;
  8. Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, parents can make a complaint through the school's complaints procedure.
  9. In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, parents have a right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

## Procedures for recording bullying behaviour

- The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour adhere to the anti-bullying procedures for primary and post-primary schools as outlined in section 6.8.10
- All reports of concerns of bullying made by a child will be noted by the relevant teacher. The teacher will include in the note actions taken and a note of discussions held with those involved. The teacher will attach any written account from the children to this note. **A copy of this should be given to the principal.**
- If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- **The relevant teacher must use the recording template at Appendix 3 to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:**
  - 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 the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.**
- In each of the circumstances at (a) and (b) above, the recording template at **Appendix 3** must be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable. It should also be noted that the timeline for recording bullying behaviour in the recording template at **Appendix 3** does not in any way preclude the relevant teacher from consulting the Principal or Deputy Principal at an earlier stage in relation to a case.

## Bullying as part of a continuum of behaviour

- Bullying behaviour can be part of a continuum of behaviour rather than a stand-alone issue and in some cases behaviour may escalate beyond that which can be described as bullying to serious physical or sexual assault or harassment. In such cases the behaviour will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour Policy and referral will be made to the relevant external agencies and authorities as appropriate.
- In cases where the school has serious concerns in relation to managing the behaviour of a pupil, the advice of the National Education Psychological Service (NEPS) will be sought.

### **Referral of serious cases to the HSE**

- In relation to bullying in schools, *Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011* (Children First) and the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* provide that in situations where “the incident is serious and where the behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive, the school must consult the HSE Children and Family Social Services with a view to drawing up an appropriate response, such as a management plan”.
- Serious instances of bullying behaviour either by pupils or adults will in accordance with the Children First and *the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*, be referred to the HSE Children and Family Services and/or Gardaí as appropriate.
- The *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* also provide that where school personnel have concerns about a child but are not sure whether to report the matter to the HSE, the Designated Liaison Person must seek advice from the HSE Children and Family Social Services.

### **Supports for Pupils affected by bullying**

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*) :

- Pupils affected by bullying both those who have been bullied and those who have bullied may need counselling, unfortunately the school does not have a counsellor. The school will advise parents on where counselling services may be available.
- The school runs a wide range of activities for children throughout the year both during and after school. The school will encourage pupils affected by bullying to become involved in these activities if they are not already involved.
- Class teachers will check with pupils affected by bullying on a regular basis.
- The school will seek to identify areas of responsibility for children affected by bullying which will help to improve their self-esteem.
- Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour are encouraged to discuss them with their class teachers.
- The school will seek assistance from NEPs as required in each case and will act on advice received.

### **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.



## 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.

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

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.

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 otherwise it will be readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) 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: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal)

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

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

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

## **Appendix 2 Building a positive school culture and climate**

The following are some actions that are taken in our school to help build a positive school culture and climate and to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour.

- All school users are expected to model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.
- Pupils are explicitly taught what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- Key respect messages are displayed in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Pupils are involved in the development of these messages.
- Pupils receive positive attention for being good.
- Staff 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.
- Staff give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- A system of encouragement and rewards is used to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.
- Pupils are taught about the appropriate use of social media.
- Pupils are encouraged to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use. Pupils who ignore these rules are followed up on in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.
- Parents and the Parents' Association are actively encouraged to become involved in awareness raising campaigns around social media.
- The school actively promotes the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.
- The school highlights and explicitly teaches school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.
- All staff actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- Pupils are supervised during school times and at all school activities.
- Staff encourage pupils to help them identify bullying hot spots and hot times in the school.
- The school has an active Student Council.

