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Promoting Friendship

Anti-Bullying Policy

Policy Statement

Scoil Cholmcille recognises the requirement of having an agreed policy for dealing with bullying if it happens.

Rationale

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 Scoil Cholmcille, Newtowncunningham 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.

Key Principles

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)
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

Defining Bullying Behaviour

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.

Reporting a Bullying Concern

A pupil or parent may bring a bullying concern to any teacher in the school. Individual teachers must take appropriate measures regarding reports of bullying behaviour in accordance with this policy. However, the relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are the class teachers with the support of the principal teacher as necessary. Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances are appropriate.

Prevention Strategies used in Scoil Cholmcille

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:

- Full implementation of the SPHE, RSE, Stay Safe, and Walk Tall programmes and curricula to ensure that school culture supports a safe social and personal environment.
- Training for staff in delivering these programmes.
- School wide training on bullying (to include all school personnel, students and parents and wider community)
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying (Stay Safe Programme, NW Health Board, Donegal Education Centre, Rural Respecting Difference Programme.) Lessons will focus primarily on positive

behaviour and building resilience, however, the children will also be taught strategies for dealing with bullies and that it is never acceptable to bully others.

- School wide delivery of lessons on **relational aggression** (RSE/Walk Tall), **Cyber Bullying** (Be Safe-Be Webwise, Think Before you Click), **Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying** (SPHE)**Diversity and interculturalism (**Respecting Difference Programme**)**
- Training for teachers on: resolving bullying; internet safety and cyber bullying; sexual orientation and homophobia
- The implementation of regular whole school awareness measures. For example: annual Anti – Bullying week and parent seminars.
- 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.
- Buddy and other student support activities can help to support vulnerable children, and encourage a culture of peer support.
- Ensuring that students know who to tell and how to tell, eg:
  - Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
  - Hand note up with homework.
  - Make a phone call to the school or to a trusted teacher in the school.
  - Get a parent or friend to tell on your behalf.
  - How can parents tell?
  - How can bystanders tell?
- Copies of the Anti-Bullying Policy will be given to all new parents.
- During the open day for new parents, the principal will speak with the parents about bullying,
  - ✓ the standards of behaviour expected from children in the school
  - ✓ what action the parents should take if their child is being bullied
  - ✓ what action the parents should take if told that their child has engaged in bullying behaviour.
- Pupils' anti–bullying posters are displayed throughout the school.
- Puppet shows and other visiting speakers are invited periodically to help deliver the school's message on bullying.
- Teachers encourage all children to take part in group work, games and sports.
- Parents are reminded of their responsibility in supervising social media sites outside school. Pupils do not have access to these sites at school. Parents are expected to be aware that there is an age restriction on the use of these sites.
  The Board of Management recommends in the strongest terms that children attending this school should not have access to Snapchat, Instagram or other similar social media.

Procedures for investigating Bullying

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:

- Teachers respond sensitively to pupils who disclose incidents of bullying and investigate all disclosed incidents of bullying;
- Answers will be sought to the questions of what, where, when, who and why;

- Investigation is usually carried out outside the classroom to ensure confidentiality and to avoid humiliation;
- If a group of children are involved, it is normal practice to first interview each one individually. Then the group as a whole meets and each member is asked for her account of what happened to ensure that everyone is clear about what everyone else has said;
- Pupils who are not directly involved may be asked for information if deemed appropriate;
- If a child reports electronic bullying, parents are informed.

Dealing and Responding to Bullying

If it is determined that bullying has occurred it is dealt with as circumstances require:
- Support will be provided for anyone who is bullied by offering them an immediate opportunity to talk about their experience with their teacher or other teacher along with continuing support when they feel they need it. A victim will be assured that the school community will help them and put monitoring procedures in place to safeguard them;
- In all serious incidents parents of the victim are informed;
- Help and support will also be sought for the bully. This will include speaking to them to discover why they became involved. The bully will be helped to see things from the victim's point of view. In serious cases (determined jointly by the teacher and principal) parents are informed. The school's Code of Behaviour applies and if necessary appropriate sanctions are enforced (e.g. loss of privilege, make good any damage or loss, etc). The aim of all intervention is to modify the bully's behaviour and to prevent reoccurrence. If necessary outside agencies e.g. NEPS, Garda JLO, etc will be asked to supply support;
- Incidents of bullying will be used as opportunities for reinforcing the Anti-Bullying policy of the school. Follow up meetings may be arranged as appropriate to assess progress and/or restore relationships. In all cases every effort is made for all parties to learn from the experience and to move on from it ;
- All serious incidents of bullying (according to the definition) are reported to the principal or deputy principal.

Recording of Bullying Behaviour

The Board of Management recommends the following procedures for the noting and recording of bullying behaviour. All such records must be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation.

(i) While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher will use his/her professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.

(ii) 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.

(iii) 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 30 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.

See Template in Appendix 3: DES Procedures

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

- o Individual counselling for students where appropriate.
- o Group work such as circle time where appropriate.
- o SET approach – Circles of Care programme.

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.

A Collaborative Approach

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management.

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, 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.

This policy was updated and reviewed on 05.10.2021.

Signed: *Francis Conaghan*   Signed: *Nicola McCarthy*

     Chairperson of BoM   Principal

Appendix 3

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name _____ Class_____

2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

_____
_____
_____
_____

3. Source of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es))*		4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))*	
Pupil concerned		Playground	
Other Pupil		Classroom	
Parent		Corridor	
Teacher		Toilets	
Other		School Bus	
		Other	

5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern

6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) *

Physical Aggression		Cyber-bullying	
Damage to Property		Intimidation	
Isolation/Exclusion		Malicious Gossip	
Name Calling		Other (specify)	

7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

9. Details of actions taken

Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____
* Note: The categories listed in the tables 3, 4 & 6 are suggested and schools may add to or amend these to suit their own circumstances.