



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 the **Convent Primary 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 2013.

Best Practice in the Prevention of Bullying Behaviour

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.

Definition of Bullying

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, gender.

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.

Examples of Bullying behaviours

This list is not exhaustive and maybe added to, at annual reviews

General Behaviours which apply to all types of bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Humiliation; including name-calling, reference to academic ability etc.• Intimidation; including aggressive use of body language.• Verbal abuse, anonymous or otherwise.• Physical abuse or threatened abuse.• Aggressive or obscene language.• Offensive joke; whether spoken or by email, text messaging etc.• Victimisation; including very personal remarks.• Exclusion and isolation.• Intrusion through interfering with personal possessions.• Repeated unreasonable assignment to duties that are obviously unfavorable.• Repeated unreasonable deadlines or tasks.• Threats, including demands for money.• An attack by rumour, gossip, innuendo or ridicule on any individual's reputation.
Cyber bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 'Flaming': Online fights using electronic messages with angry and vulgar language.• 'Harassment': Repeatedly sending offensive, rude, and insulting messages.• 'Cyber Stalking': Repeatedly sending messages that include threats of harm or are highly intimidating or engaging in other on-line activities that make a person afraid for his or her own safety.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Denigration’: ‘Dissing’ someone online. Sending or posting cruel gossip or rumors about a person to damage his or her reputation or friendships. • ‘Impersonation’: Pretending to be someone else and sending or posting material online that makes someone look bad, gets her/him in trouble or danger, or damages her/his reputation or friendships. • ‘Outing and Trickery’: Tricking someone into revealing secret or embarrassing information which is then shared online. • ‘Exclusion’: Intentionally excluding someone from an on-line group, like a ‘buddy list’.
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School Contact Personnel

The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying in this school are as follows:

Principal: FIONA FITZGERALD

Deputy Principal: ALISON VARLEY

All class teachers

Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

Education & Prevention Strategies

The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyberbullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school include the following:

We are committed to promoting a positive school climate which fosters positive caring behaviours amongst the school community.

Sample Education & Prevention Strategies at the Convent Primary School

- We model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.
 - We explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
 - We actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.
 - We highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.
 - We display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school involving pupils in the development of these messages.
 - We actively “catch pupils being good” – noticing and acknowledging desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
 - We give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
 - We 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 special needs.
 - We specifically teach our more vulnerable SEN pupils social skills & behaviour management strategies as outlined in their individual behaviour plans.
 - We have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.
 - Buddies and support personnel contribute to nurturing a safe school environment, encouraging a culture of respect and support.
 - We explicitly teach pupils in 5th/6th class about the safe use of social media.
 - Bi-annually the school hires an external consultant to complete pupil and parent workshops
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highlighting the dangers of social media and cyber bullying. An online workshop is provided for parents after the pupil workshop.

- Positive self-esteem is fostered among the pupils by celebrating individual differences.
 - We foster and enhance self-esteem amongst our pupils through curricular and extracurricular activities.
 - We promote a 'telling' school environment where pupils are encouraged to tell an adult if they see /hear unacceptable behaviours. Pupils are made aware of their important role in caring for others and helping to ensure that everyone is treated respectfully.
 - All staff are vigilant for signs of bullying behaviour, are aware of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it appropriately. Staff are particularly vigilant in monitoring pupils who are considered at risk of bullying/ being bullied.
 - Pupils are helped to develop empathy by discussing feelings and by trying to put themselves in the place of others.
 - During our scheduled awareness-raising week, an anti-bullying survey is conducted at the middle and senior levels, thereby eliciting information about the level and nature of bullying at school.
 - The SPHE curriculum, including the Walk Tall, Bi Folláin, RSE and Stay Safe programme is used throughout the school to support the anti-bullying policy and the SPHE policy is reviewed and updated frequently.
 - The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed regularly with the pupils both in class and at assemblies highlighting the benefits of healthy behaviours for all.
 - All disclosed incidents of bullying are investigated and followed up appropriately.
 - Parents contribute to and support the school's policy on bullying by encouraging positive behaviour both at home and at school, by being vigilant for signs that their child is being bullied or is bullying others, by communicating concerns to the school. Parents are reminded periodically to come to staff members as soon as possible if they have concerns.
 - We ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.
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Investigation & Follow-Up Procedures

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

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:

- On being informed of an alleged incident of bullying (whether by an adult or children) the teacher dealing with the report will first interview the victim(s) and discuss the feelings which the victim(s) experienced because of the alleged bullying behaviour.
 - Incidents of bullying will initially be dealt with by the class teacher and a record will be kept by the teacher in the class behavior book.
 - A calm problem-solving approach will be used to deal with bullying incidences.
 - People reporting incidents of bullying will be informed that they are acting responsibly.
 - An interview will then take place with the alleged perpetrator(s). If the bullying involves a group of pupils, members of that group will first be met individually and then as a whole.
 - Having discussed the negative impact bullying behaviour has on both perpetrator(s) and victim(s) restorative practices aimed at resolving the difficulties will be negotiated with all concerned. Responsibility will be placed on all individuals within the group to take appropriate steps to ensure that it does not happen again.
 - If on the conclusion of the preliminary investigation the teacher is convinced that bullying has occurred the parent(s)/guardian(s) of all concerned will be contacted.
 - Incidents of bullying that are unresolved after 20 days, are of a serious nature or those that involve
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pupils from a number of classes will be reported to the principal using the specific recording template and will be retained at the school.

- Depending on the seriousness of the bullying some or all of Level 2 Supportive Interventions will be utilised.
- Repeated incidents of bullying behaviour will result in the imposition of sanctions. Such sanctions will be proportionate to the seriousness of the bullying behaviour.

Working with Pupils Affected by Bullying

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

- Pupils who have experienced bullying behaviours will be supported to express the negative feelings they have experienced as a result of bullying and it will be acknowledged that it is appropriate to feel this way as a result of negative experiences.
 - They will be reassured that they have behaved responsibly by seeking the support of people who care, whom they trust and are committed to helping them resolve their difficulties.
 - Adults involved will endeavour to nurture empathy in the perpetrator(s) of bullying behaviours highlighting the negative feelings associated with inappropriate behaviours and the positive feelings associated with healthy behaviours.
 - Every opportunity will be provided to raise the self-esteem of pupils affected by bullying through our S.P.H.E. programme, helping to develop healthy friendships/ social and emotional skills, build resilience and conflict resolution skills.
 - Pupils involved in bullying who have special educational needs will be supported with individual behaviour plans to address their specific behavioural/ social/ emotional difficulties.
 - A 'restorative practices approach' will be taken to repair relationships of pupils involved in bullying. Unwanted behaviours will be identified, their impact discussed, and agreement sought to restore acceptable behaviours. This may involve school support staff, peers and parents as deemed appropriate and necessary.
 - Request for assistance from external agencies such as the National Educational Psychological
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Service, Health Service Executive Community Services, the National Behavioural Support Service, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, National Council for Special Education, Túsla

- Referral of a Child displaying behavioural problems for psychological assessment (with the parent(s)/guardian(s) consent).

Supervision & Monitoring

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.

Policy Adoption

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 12th December 2017.

Communication

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.

Implementation Review

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.

Chairperson BOM

18-09-2024
