Coláiste an Chraoibhín

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 Coláiste an Chraoibhín 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.

Coláiste an Chraoibhín recognises that students need a positive, safe and caring environment to progress in their education. Every child has the right to be educated in a safe secure environment where their moral, intellectual, personal and social development is promoted. Their parents and carers also need to be informed and re-assured that their children are being educated in a safe, caring and respectful atmosphere. Coláiste an Chraoibhín will actively strive to prevent bullying occurring, detect bullying if it is occurring and deal effectively with cases of bullying if they arise. 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:

Positive school culture and climate:

A cornerstone in the prevention of bullying is a positive school culture and climate that is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity and respect. In addition to the role of management and staff, parents and pupils have a role and responsibility in helping to prevent and address bullying behaviour. Central to a positive school culture is respectful relationships across the entire school community. This encompasses relationships amongst peers (e.g. pupil to pupil, teacher to teacher) and relationships between groups (e.g. teachers and pupils, parents and teachers etc.) A school-wide approach (involving school management, staff, parents and pupils) to dealing with the problem of bullying behaviour is a key element of effective practice.

Key principles of a positive school culture and climate

- ➢ Coláiste an Chraoibhín acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment while acknowledging the uniqueness of each individual and his/her worth as a human being.
- ➢ Effective leadership;
- ➢ The school promotes positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among all its members.
- ➢ Coláiste an Chraoibhín prohibits vulgar, offensive or other aggressive behaviour or language by any of its members.
- ➢ The school has the capacity to change in response to pupils' needs.
- ➢ The school takes particular care of "at risk" pupils and uses its monitoring systems to facilitate early intervention where necessary and it responds to the needs, fears or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner.
- ➢ The school recognises the need to work in partnership with and keep parents informed on procedures to improve relationships on a school-wide basis. Coláiste an Chraoibhín recognises the role of parents in equipping the pupil with a range of life skills whilst also recognising the role of other community agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying.
- ➢ The school promotes qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among all its members both in school and out of school.

> ➤ Staff members share a collegiate responsibility, under the direction of the Principal, to act in preventing bullying/aggressive behaviour by any member of the school community.
> ➤ 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* 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.

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 will be dealt with, as appropriate, 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 students:

Physical aggression: This behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people.

Intimidation: Some bullying behaviour may involve very aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon or the use of facial expressions which conveys aggression and/or dislike. Any form of intimidation of a member of staff will be considered as bullying under Coláiste an Chraoibhín's Anti-Bullying Policy and will be dealt with accordingly.

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. Coláiste an Chraoibhín 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 following grounds i.e. gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability.

Isolation/exclusion and other relational bullying: It may be accompanied by writing insulting remarks about the pupil in public places, by passing around notes 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.

Cyber-bullying: This type of bullying is carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, e-mail, apps, gaming sites and other online technologies. This includes circulating or publishing through ICT, material recorded and circulated without consent for the purpose of undermining or causing damage to the professional or personal reputation of another person. Any usage of the internet, digital media or mobile phones which intrudes on the privacy and dignity of staff, students or their families is deemed a serious breach of the school Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy. Any inappropriate use of social media which is deemed as harassing staff, students or their families may be reported to the Gardaí (Non-Fatal Offences Against the Person Act 1997).

A student who sets up a social media page is responsible for the content on that page. All students who have administrator rights to a social media page have shared responsibility for its contents. When a student clicks "Like" to a posting on a social media page it draws attention and awareness of this entry to his/her own friends. Therefore, when a student indicates that he/she "Likes" an entry which is inappropriate or offensive, they are contributing to the intrusion of privacy and dignity of staff, students and their families. This will be deemed a serious breach of the schools Code of Behaviour.

Name calling: Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) which hurts, insults or humiliates is regarded as a form of bullying behaviour.

Damage to property: Personal property can be the focus of attention for bullying behaviour.

Extortion: Demands for money may be made, often accompanied by threats.

A false accusation of bullying against another member of our school community will be dealt with severely. In certain cases, it may be necessary for the school to seek the assistance of other local persons and formal agencies such as NEPS, HSE social workers, community workers, Gardaí etc.

Indicators of bullying behaviour

The following signs and symptoms may suggest that a pupil is being bullied:

> ➢ Anxiety about travelling to and from school e.g. requesting parents to drive or collect him/her, changing travel routes, avoiding regular times for travelling to and from school;
> ➢ Unwillingness to go to school, refusal to attend, truancy.
> ➢ Deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school.
> ➢ Pattern of physical illnesses e.g. headaches, stomach aches.
> ➢ Unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour which may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or more especially after longer school holidays.
> ➢ Visible signs of anxiety or distress e.g. stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, bed wetting.
> ➢ Spontaneous out-of-character comments about either pupils or teachers
> ➢ Possessions missing or damaged
> ➢ Increased requests for money or stealing money
> ➢ Unexplained bruising or cuts or damaged clothing
> ➢ Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling him/her.

There may be other signs depending on the individual and his/her circumstances. The above signs do not necessarily mean that a pupil is being bullied but if repeated or occurring in combination, these signs do warrant investigation to establish what is affecting the pupil.

Measures being taken by the school to explicitly address bullying:

The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:

> ➢ Class teachers
> ➢ Year heads
> ➢ Deputy Principal/ Principal

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*)

> ➢ Code of Behaviour
> ➢ Anti-Bullying policy
> ➢ A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact
> ➢ Supervision of all areas of the building and external areas during breaks.
> ➢ Weekly Pastoral care meetings.
> ➢ Weekly staff briefings.
> ➢ Merit Award System (increasing self-esteem of students).
> ➢ Buddy system.
> ➢ Awareness by all staff members for signs of bullying.
> ➢ Discussions on the topic of bullying and its effects in S.P.H.E. classes.
> ➢ Availability of school counsellors to deal with bullying situations
> ➢ As self-esteem is a major factor in determining behaviour, as a school we provide pupils with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth.
> ➢ Educating pupils on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while on-line and developing a culture of reporting any concerns about cyber-bullying
> ➢ Approaches to decreasing the likelihood of bullying for pupils with SEN include improving inclusion, focusing on developing social skills, paying attention to key moments such as transitioning from primary to post-primary and cultivating a good school culture which has respect for all and helping one another are central to this policy.
> ➢ The SPHE curriculum makes specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the inter-related areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships.
> ➢ There is space within the teaching of all subjects to foster an attitude of respect for all: to promote the value of diversity; to address prejudice and stereotyping and to highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
> ➢ Co-operation and group enterprise is promoted through team sports, school clubs and societies as well as through practical subjects. Sporting activities provide excellent opportunities for channelling and learning how to control aggression.

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)*:

Students, parents/guardians are encouraged to report any concerns they may have regarding incidents of bullying to the school authority. Students should contact any one of the following if they are being bullied or if they are aware of other students being bullied:

> ➢ Year Head
> ➢ Subject teacher or any teacher
> ➢ Principal or Deputy Principal
> ➢ Buddy (In the case of first years)
> ➢ Their Parents/Guardians, who will then contact the school.

Teachers who are suspicious that a student is being bullied will report verbally to his/her Year Head or Principal/Deputy Principal. A record of this suspicion will be entered under 'Concerns' in the schools Record Sheet and a copy will be given to the student's Year Head.

All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the yearhead. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying, they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly. Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers, cleaners are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant yearhead.

1. The Year Head (and in the event of their unavailability the Principal or Deputy- Principal) after receiving a report of bullying will interview and reassure the victim that the matter will be dealt with confidentially and speedily. The Year Head may seek the assistance of a school counsellor to help deal with the situation.
2. The Year Head will interview the alleged bully and impress upon him/her that such behaviour is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.
3. 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.
4. The yearhead 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 yearhead must record the bullying behaviour in the standardised recording template (Appendix 3) and a copy must be provided to the Deputy Principal.
5. 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
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. The Year Head may decide to impose sanctions on the bully depending on the seriousness of the incident. A strict verbal warning may be sufficient.
8. In the event of a repeated incident, Parents/Guardians of the bully will be asked to visit the school to discuss the matter.
9. If a solution cannot be achieved, the Year Head will request the assistance of the Deputy Principal or Principal.
10. The bully may be suspended. On returning to school, the student and his/her Parents/Guardian will be interviewed by the Principal/Deputy Principal/Year head. They will be asked for a guarantee of future good behaviour. 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.
11. Victims and their Parents/Guardians will be continually reassured where necessary.
12. Under no circumstances will the Parents/Guardian of the victim be allowed talk to or meet the bully. It is also advised that the Parents/Guardian of either student should not contact one another, as this could exacerbate the situation. Each incident will be dealt with individually and on its own merits.
13. Serious instances of bullying behaviour should, in accordance with the Children First and the Child Protection Procedures for Post-Primary Schools, be referred to the HSE Children and Family Services and/or Gardaí as appropriate.

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***):**

A programme of support for pupils who have been bullied is in place. Students who have been involved in an incident of bullying will be highlighted at the weekly care team meetings and a plan will be put in place to support these students. Such pupils may need counselling and/or opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed. Pupils involved in bullying behaviour need assistance on an ongoing basis. Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.

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.

Ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on ___14\12\2b___ [date].

The 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 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.

Signed: _____
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _____
Act! (Principal)

Date: 14/12/2021

Date: 14/12/2021

Date of next review: 14/12/2022