

Coláiste Cholmcille

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 Coláiste Cholmcille 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.

Mission Statement: *Coláiste Cholmcille is a community which respects the individual's rights and self-worth and aims to provide a happy and safe environment in which the individual may achieve her/his spiritual, academic and personal potential in order to develop all positive aspects of the individual and the community.*

Links to Ethos: *Our Characteristic Spirit document states: "The school is a caring and welcoming one, endeavouring to promote a culture of good relationships where people thrive and grow". The school makes extensive use of Restorative Justice Practices which are very appropriate in any conflict situation and, in particular, where bullying is suspected.*

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 key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour. The Board will promote 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*
- *supports effective leadership*
- *adopts a school-wide approach*
- *shares an understanding of what bullying is and its impact*
- *implements education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that builds 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.*
- *provides effective supervision and monitoring of pupils*
- *offers supports for staff*
- *engages in consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and evaluates 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.*
- *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*
- *Offensive text messaging; inappropriate use of phones, social media sites etc.*
- *Victimisation; including very personal remarks, or racist or homophobic comments*
- *Intrusion through interfering with personal possessions or locker.*
- *Threats, including demands for money.*
- *An attack by rumour, gossip, innuendo or ridicule on any individual's reputation.*

(Please note the following has now been inserted in to our Code of Conduct document "Circulating, publishing or distributing (including on the internet) material associated with school activities including but not limited to material in relation to staff and students where such circulation undermines, humiliates or causes damage to another person is considered a serious breach of school discipline and may result in disciplinary action. As part of such disciplinary action the BOM reserves the right to suspend or expel a student or students where it considers the actions to warrant such sanctions.")

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.

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows: Year Heads, TY and LCA Co-ordinators, The Chaplain, Guidance Counsellors, The Deputy Principal and The Principal. Where it deemed helpful, other members of staff may be asked to assist in any investigation.

5. 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 are as follows

- *All Junior students are facilitated through the S.P.H.E. (Social, Personal and Health Education) programme which incorporates bullying information and learning. Aspects of C.S.P.E will also come into play here. All students will also receive guidance in their Religion classes.*
- *Everyone is encouraged to participate in Anti Bullying Week, which takes place on an annual basis.*
- *A Mentor system is in place, where Senior student(s) are paired with 1st year student' groups at the start of the new academic year; training is provided for the Seniors on how to be a good mentor.*
- *New students, who join the School at other times, are allocated a buddy - ideally, this is another student from within the same year group.*
- *Positive reinforcement of behaviour for the better good of the community is encouraged through a variety of activities.*
- *All students to be informed of the school anti-bullying policy and the steps involved. First Year students to be informed of these during induction day in September.*

- *Coping skills and strategies for dealing with bullying to be taught in all S.P.H.E classes and through the school pastoral programme.*
- *Policies and strategies to be explained to parents of incoming First Years at the Information Night before summer.*
- *Teaching of anti-bullying curriculum as a preventative measure each year.*
- *Regular in-service for teachers involved with anti-bullying programme.*

6. Incidents of bullying behaviour will be dealt with in the following manner:

- *Students should discuss any incident of bullying with a teacher or another trusted adult within the school system; this is responsible behaviour rather than "telling tales".*
- *Parents/guardians should contact the school regarding incidents of bullying behaviour which they might suspect or that have come to their attention through their children or other sources.*
- *All members of the school community should take responsibility for reporting incidents of suspected bullying*
- *A bullying incident form will be filled by the reporting teacher and forwarded to the appropriate member of staff*
- *It is vital that the person reporting the incident is protected from victimisation. Whoever is dealing with the incident must be discreet and careful. Staff will support students who report bullying*
- *All serious incidents of bullying (e.g. an assault or long term exclusion) should be reported to the Principal straight away*
- *While the victim's right to privacy is protected, staff members must not give guarantees of confidentiality*
- *Appropriate personnel will interview the students involved in a bullying incident.*
- *The students involved will be spoken to and encouraged to solve the problem.*
- *The alleged victim and the other students may be invited to write down any relevant details.*
- *Any interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils involved.*
- *Restorative Justice procedures will be utilised throughout*

7. The Year Head will monitor progress of students involved in a bullying incident and will liaise with the tutor(s) for assistance.

- *Where the incident is deemed to be minor, a verbal warning will be given to the bully pointing out how he/she is in breach of the Code of Behaviour and trying to get him/her to see the situation from the victim's point of view. If deemed appropriate, parents may be contacted. The incident will no longer be considered if there is no recurrence within that academic term.*
- *If the behaviour is more serious Restorative Justice Procedures will commence. The parents/guardians of the victims and bullies may be informed. Thus, they will be given the opportunity of discussing the matter and are in a position to help and support their children. Appropriate sanctions may be imposed. The incident will no longer be considered if there is no recurrence within that academic year.*
- *If there is a serious incident, perhaps repeated verbal assault or coercion, the matter should be reported to the Deputy/Vice Principal or Principal. Again Restorative Practices will be utilised. Parents will be informed and appropriate sanctions applied.*
- *Where the incident is deemed to be more serious (e.g. gross misbehaviour or physical assault), the Principal should be informed immediately and he will inform the Board of Management, if necessary.*
- *Offenders and victims of bullying may be referred to counselling.*
- *Sanctions may include:*
 - *A contract of good behaviour*

- *Withdrawal of privileges*
- *Lunchtime Detention*
- *Evening Detention*
- *Other sanctions as may be deemed appropriate*
- *Suspension*
- *Expulsion.*
- *In the case of a complaint regarding a staff member, this should be referred immediately to the Principal.*
- *Where cases, relating to either student or teacher, remain unresolved at school level, the matter should be referred to the Board of Management.*

8. Support for pupils who have been bullied/who display bullying behaviour

For those who have experienced bullying counselling and/or opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to improve friendships and develop social skills and thereby build resilience will be provided. Pupils involved in bullying behaviour also need assistance on an ongoing basis. The following are suggested (not exhaustive)

- *Seating arrangements in class to be constructively managed*
- *Introduction to extracurricular activities to be arranged*
- *Involvement in outside-of-school activities (NYP, Sports and Cultural groups) to be facilitated*
- *Regular meetings with significant staff member*
- *Buddy arrangement with older, responsible student*

9. 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.

10. 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.

11. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on September 2013.

12. 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.

13. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification will be 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: _____ Signed: _____

(Chairperson of Board of Management) (Principal)

Date: _____ Date: _____

Date of next review: _____