



Coláiste Cholmcille
Anti-Bullying Policy
2024-2025

Coláiste Cholmcille Anti-Bullying Policy

Mission Statement and Ethos:

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. 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.

The 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 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.

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.

- 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.

Aims of the policy

- To promote a positive school culture and climate that is inclusive and welcoming of difference.
- To promote bullying prevention and education strategies.
- To raise awareness amongst the entire school community of bullying and unacceptable bullying behaviours.
- To promote procedures for reporting, investigating and recording incidents of bullying.
- To provide support for those affected by, and involved in, bullying.
- To facilitate ongoing evaluation and review of the effectiveness of the schools anti-bullying policy.

All members of the school community are subject to this policy. Bullying behaviour such as cyber bullying which breaks the law may be referred to the Gardai. The policy will be applicable during the following:

- School time (including break/lunch times)
- Going to and from school
- School tours/trips
- Extra-curricular activities
- Any occasion when the student is in uniform during school hours and up to a period of 15 minutes after school.

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’.

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.

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.

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school’s Code of Behaviour, Remote Learning Policy and Acceptable Use Policy (Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools).

Examples of bullying behaviours

General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying

- Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc.
- Physical aggression
- Peer Pressure whereby a student feels they are within a toxic friendship group or a particular person is threatening/isolating them if they refuse to do something.
- Any type of manipulation
- Any type of behaviour which attacks another person's self confidence
- Blackmail and intimidation
- Damage to property
- Name calling
- Slagging
- The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person
- Offensive graffiti
- Extortion
- Insulting or offensive gestures
- The 'look'
- Invasion of personal space
- A combination of any of the types listed.

Cyberbullying

Cyber Bullying has been defined as:

An aggressive, intentional act carried out by:

- A group or individual
- Using social media such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat etc... on a once off basis, repeatedly and/or over time against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself.
- Cyber bullying does not involve face to face or physical confrontation.
- It does not require any close proximity to the cyber victim.

- Cyber bullying can also be carried out anonymously.
- Disinhibition exists where young people say and do things online that they would never do face to face. It is conducted in an environment perceived as free from adult supervision. As the fear of discovery is absent, there is no perceived control on the cyber bully's behaviour that exists in 'real world' encounters.

Computers/Smartphones

- Denigration: Spreading rumours, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation
- Harassment: Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual
- Impersonation: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name
- Flaming: Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight
- Trickery: Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online
- Outing: Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images
- Exclusion: Purposefully excluding some from an online group
- Fraping: Hacking into a person's social networking account to send false/untrue messages or to change details while pretending to be that person
- Cyber stalking: Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety
- Silent telephone/mobile phone call
- Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls
- Abusive text messages
- Abusive email
- Abusive posts or comments on any form of social media
- Any kind of abuse in a remote learning environment

Homophobic and Transgender

- Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation
- Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation
- Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian.... used in a derogatory manner
- Physical intimidation or attacks
- Threats

Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community

- Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background

- Exclusion on the basis of any of the above

Relational

This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:

- Malicious gossip/spreading rumours
- Isolation/exclusion from groups/ignoring
- Ignoring
- Excluding from the group
- Taking someone's friends away
- 'Bitching'
- Spreading rumours
- Breaking confidence
- Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear
- The 'look'
- Use or terminology such as 'nerd' in a derogatory way

Sexual

- Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching
- Harassment
- 'Slut shaming' where girls are targeted on social media or elsewhere and bullied through degradation/humiliation for their perceived sexual conduct

Special Educational Needs, Disability

- Name calling
- Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs
- Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying
- Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues
- Mimicking a person's disability
- Setting others up for ridicule

Education and Prevention Strategies;

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:

- Year group Assemblies and meetings on 4 mornings with class tutors are used to promote positive reinforcement and emphasise the school's ethos of care and compassion.
- All students are consistently reminded of the anti-bullying policy in Coláiste Cholmcille which is discussed with them specifically during Induction day at the start of the new academic year. This is part of the Code of Behaviour which is agreed to and signed by all students and parents prior to enrolment in Coláiste Cholmcille.
- A culture of reporting bullying is fostered in the school through assemblies, visits by management to classes, SPHE lessons and the Wellbeing Programme. Particular emphasis is placed on standing up for others, encouraging self-confidence, recognising both good and toxic relationships and being forthcoming with information to help the school authorities in identifying and solving issues of bullying.
- Students will know who to report incidents of bullying to. This can include the class teacher (or any teacher), class tutor, Year head, Principal, Vice Principals, School Chaplain, SNA or any staff member. Students of all years and age groups are continually reminded of who they can tell if they are being bullied or they feel that someone else is.
- A safe space where students can go at break and lunch times if they feel isolated or feel in any way that they need time out is provided.
- The introduction of our new Mobile Phone Policy in September 2024, prohibits the use of mobile phones in the school during school hours. Please see our Mobile Phone policy for further information.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes including coping skills and strategies.
- Initiatives which deal explicitly with identity based bullying include; LGBTQAI plus Week, SPHE (in Junior Cycle) and RSE modules (in Senior Cycle).
- Particular attention is paid to the key period of transition to secondary school through the Transition and Induction Programme for incoming first years. Policies and strategies are explained at First Year Information night.
- The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our students through both curricular and extra-curricular activities. Positive reinforcement of behaviour for the better good of the community is encouraged through these activities.

- Mental Health Week and Anti-Bullying week involve the promotion of positive mental attitudes and the importance of inclusion.
- We encourage parents to approach the school authorities if they feel their child is being bullied. They can have confidence in the school's determination to help and support their child. Similarly, parents are reminded that if their child is involved in bullying behaviour, they have a responsibility to support the school's anti-bullying policy and address their child's inappropriate behaviour.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering Well-being programmes
- The School Chaplain meets with all first years on an individual basis during the first term to ensure they are settling in and to provide any additional support needed.
- The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping. School wide delivery of lessons on Relational aggression, Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying, Diversity and Interculturalism.
- Accessing the support of Community Gardaí and Donegal Youth Services, NYP and Foróige to cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying. All 1st year students will partake in a cyber-bullying workshop delivered by Foróige in Coláiste Cholmcille.
- Coláiste Cholmcille is involved in Jigsaw's "One Good School", an initiative which supports the mental health and wellbeing of young people by developing a shared responsibility across the whole school community. As a Jigsaw One Good School, students, staff and parents work together to promote positive mental health and wellbeing for all.
- Senior Prefects, 6th year students who have been successful in their application for the role and who have attended training, monitor and meet regularly with the group of 1st years students they are assigned to. This gives an opportunity to answer questions, reassure and give any help needed. Senior Prefects who observe or suspect bullying will report such.
- New students, who join the School at other times, are allocated a buddy in an informal capacity – ideally, this is another student from within the same year group
- The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.
- All subject teachers strive to promote respect, harmony and tolerance in their class
- Involvement of the Student Council in contributing to a safe school environment. The Student council is active in promoting activities that can help to support students and encourage a culture of peer respect, support and reporting.

- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities.
- Non-teaching and ancillary staff are encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers/management.

Personnel involved in Investigation

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

- The Class Tutor
- Year Heads
- TY and LCA Co-ordinator
- School Chaplain
- Guidance Counsellors
- Home School Liaison Officer
- Deputy Principals
- The Principal.

Where it deemed helpful, other members of staff may be asked to assist in any investigation. All staff members, students and parents have a responsibility to alert these teachers of any suspicions of bullying.

The School's Procedures for Investigation

The School's Procedures for Investigation Recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:

- All members of the school community should take responsibility for reporting incidents of suspected bullying. In dealing with a reported issue of alleged bullying the relevant teacher will investigate whether it has occurred. That teacher will work with the pastoral care structures in the school in recording and dealing with this issue.
- 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.
- 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".
- Each situation whether bullying or not should be recorded on accompanied templates (see Appendix 1) and stored by the relevant teachers.
- If it is decided between all relevant parties that Bullying has occurred, all reports will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.

- In cases where it is determined that bullying has occurred the parents of the parties involved will be contacted.
- Where it has been determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour the school's Code of Behaviour will be applied. This will be a private matter between his/her parents and the school.
- Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving the issues.
- Teachers will take a calm, unemotional and problem solving approach to incidents of alleged bullying. Teachers will record all actions between all parties and notes of meetings held.
- Any interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils involved. Incidents will usually be investigated outside the classroom to ensure the privacy of all concerned. While the victim's right to privacy is protected, staff members must not give guarantees of confidentiality.

- 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.
- If a group is involved each member will be interviewed individually as far as is possible.

- 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. 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 will 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, 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 she 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 Reflection
 - After school Reflection

- 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.
- Once per term the Principal will provide a report to the Board of Management setting out the overall number of bullying cases reported since the previous report and giving confirmation that all cases are being dealt with in accordance with Coláiste Cholmcille's anti-bullying policy and the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary schools.

Programme of Support

The School's Programme of Support for working with students affected by bullying is as follows:

- Students who have been involved in bullying incidents will be advised by Class Tutor/Year Head/Deputy Principals/Guidance Counsellor, HSCLO, School Chaplain and may need assistance on an on-going 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 other, responsible student.
- If students require external counselling or further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying, a witness, or otherwise involved in the bullying behaviour. Guidance staff, School Chaplain and the HSCLO may liaise with parents in relation to supports available from relevant agencies.
- The target of bullying may receive counselling to help her regain her self-esteem where affected. and/or opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to improve friendships and develop social skills and thereby build resilience e.g
 - Pastoral care system
 - Tutor/Year head system
 - Guidance/Student Support Team
 - SPHE/RSE and within subject classes through a variety of activities and lessons
 - Guest speakers
 - Outside agencies such as Donegal Youth Services and NYP.

- An Garda Síochána
- The student deemed to be the bully may also receive counselling to give him/her the opportunity to learn other ways of meeting his/her 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. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communicative technology within classes as outlined in the Mobile Phone Policy.

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.

Links to other policies

These are school policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to bullying;

- Code of Behaviour
- Mobile Phone Policy
- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Online Learning Policy
- Dignity at Work Policy

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 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: _____

Appendix 1- Bullying Behaviour Record Form

1. Name of Student being bullied and class group

Name _____ Class Group _____

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

Name _____ Class Group _____

3. Source of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es))

Student concerned	
Other Student	
Parent	
Teacher	
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)	

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact _____

Signed _____

4 Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))

School Yard	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other	

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

Homophobic	
Disability/SEN	
Racist	
Traveller Community	
Other(specify)	

9. Details of actions taken

Date _____

Relevant Teacher

Date submitted to
Principal / DP
