

4.4 Scoil Choilm CNS Anti-Bullying Policy

1. Introduction

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 Choilm CNS 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.

In formulating this policy consultation took place with all stake holders, namely, staff members, parents, pupils and our BOM. Their opinions, suggestions and views were considered in the development of this policy.

2. Rationale

The management of Scoil Choilm CNS 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 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.

b) Effective leadership which

- Ensures that everyone is treated with dignity and respect regardless of colour, creed, sexual identity, ability or means.

c) A school wide approach and a recognition, understanding and ownership of this policy with all partners in the school community.

d) A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact

e) Implementation of education and prevention strategies which include awareness raising measures that –

- Build empathy, respect, and resilience in pupils; and
- Explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- Helps pupils to develop a positive self-image, self-confidence, self-respect, and self-esteem.
- Organises and promotes anti-bullying and anti-racism strategies and awareness within the school community on an on-going basis – e.g., initiatives such as anti-racism and anti-bullying week

f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils within the school day and

- The specific supervision and monitoring of pupils who have been involved in bullying.
- Ensuring that there are adequate supports in place for pupils who have been victims of bullying
- Monitoring and counselling for pupils who have been involved in bullying behaviours to develop empathy and build respect for others.

g) Supports for staff in the development of strategies for dealing with incidents of bullying.

- Providing CPD for staff in recognising the signs, symptoms, and ways of dealing with bullying.
- Providing support for staff in addressing issues with parents and other professionals.

h) Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including the use of established investigation strategies)

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

3. Definition of Bullying

In accordance with the *Anti-bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* bullying is defined as follows:

- 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 Travelling/Roma 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'.

Examples of Types of Bullying:

- Physical Aggression – pushing and shoving, punching, kicking, poking, pinching, spitting and tripping others
- Physical assault and inflicting pain on others.
- Damage to the property of another pupil
- Name calling
- Slagging or offensive graffiti
- The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person.
- Extortion
- Intimidation
- Insulting or offensive gestures
- The 'Look'
- Invasion of personal space
- Bullying based on Racism: Discrimination, exclusion, prejudiced comments, or insults based on ethnicity, colour, nationality, culture, language, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or Traveller background.
- Homophobic and transgender bullying: 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 and threats.
- Relational bullying behaviours – this involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include – malicious gossip, isolation, and exclusion, ignoring, taking someone's friend away, spreading rumours, breaking a confidence, talking aloud so that the victim can hear, the 'look', use of derogatory terminology such as 'nerd', 'creep' etc...
- Sexual harassment or bullying – this is unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching or harassing of another pupil.
- Bullying of pupils with special educational needs such as – 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 or social cues, mimicking a person's disability, setting others up for ridicule.

- Cyber Bullying
 - 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 someone from an online group
 - Cyber stalking – ongoing harassment/denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety
 - Silent telephone / mobile phone calls
 - Abusive telephone / mobile phone calls
 - Abusive text messages
 - Abusive email
 - Abusive communication on social network e.g., Face-book etc.
 - Abusive website comments / blogs / pictures
 - Abusive posts on any form of communication or technology

Every member of the school community of Scoil Choilm CNS has a role to play in the prevention of bullying. As a school we believe that there are no innocent bystanders and that everyone has a duty to stand up and speak out against bullying. We are aware of potential bullying that can arise from unstructured activities. We will vigilantly monitor children and ensure adequate supervision especially in areas such as toilets, corridors and on yard duty in obscure areas.

4. Relevant Teacher

In Scoil Choilm CNS all teachers, post holders, deputy principal and the principal have a duty to investigate, record, monitor and deal with bullying incidents. The relevant teacher in relation to dealing with incidents of bullying in the first incident is the class teacher. Incidents of bullying should always be recorded, dealt with, and brought to the attention of the principal or in her absence the Deputy Principal.

Enhancing a positive school culture and climate

The staff and management of Scoil Choilm Community National School is committed to enhancing a positive school culture and climate which acknowledges and respects everyone's right to enjoy school in a safe and secure environment. The school acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual and his/her worth as a human being. As a school community we promote positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline, and responsibility among our members. We believe that vulgar, offensive, sectarian, or other aggressive behaviour or language by any member of the school community is unacceptable.

Scoil Choilm CNS has a clear commitment to promoting equality in general and gender equality in all aspects of its functioning. The school identifies aspects of the curriculum through which positive and lasting influences can be exerted towards forming pupils' attitudes and values.

The school takes particular care of 'at risk' pupils and uses its monitoring system to facilitate early intervention where necessary. The school always tries to respond to the needs, fears, or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner. Our school recognises the need to work in partnership with parents and to keep them informed on procedures to improve relationships on a school wide basis. The school recognises parents as the primary educators

of their children and acknowledges the vital role they can play in equipping their children with a range of positive life skills which can assist in the prevention of bullying in society.

The school promotes habits of mutual respect, courtesy, and good manners to develop an awareness of the interdependence of people in groups and communities. Scoil Choilm CNS promotes qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among all its members, both in school and out of school. As a staff we share a collegiate responsibility, under the direction of the principal, to act in preventing bullying / racism / aggressive behaviour by any member of the school community.

5. Prevention Strategies

The following is a list of our school wide approach to the prevention of bullying

Celebrating Diversity

Scoil Choilm CNS is committed to developing an atmosphere which fosters respect for all members of the school community. As a school we are very proud of our diverse and eclectic school community. We believe that difference is something to be celebrated and which enriches the school community. In our school we will always strive to promote the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping and to highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour. We believe in the importance of fostering and enhancing the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extra-curricular activities. We always strive to provide pupils with opportunities to develop a positive sense of worth through formal and informal interactions.

Education Strategies

The school management believes that education of all members of our school community is an integral component in developing strategies for preventing bullying in our school. We are committed to providing whole staff continuous professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develops an awareness of what bullying is and how it impacts on pupils' lives. As part of our annual audit to assess the professional development needs of our staff, we will assess staff requirements in relation to anti-bullying and prevention strategies. The needs of the staff will be met from either in-house expertise or external sources. We believe that prevention and intervention go hand in hand. As a staff we believe that for prevention strategies to be truly effective they must involve all members of the school community, thus, providing training and raising awareness on all aspects of bullying, will include pupils, parents/guardians, and the wider school community.

Supervision and monitoring

A major aspect of prevention in our school is ensuring that there is adequate supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff are also encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. All staff members will also closely monitor students' use of communication technology within the school.

Prevention of Harassment

The Board of Management confirms that the Scoil Choilm CNS 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 or Roma community

The Voice of the Child

In our school we believe that every child has a voice and that each child's voice should be valued and respected. Our school has an active student council. The involvement of the student council is sought in contributing to the development of a safe school environment where bullying is unacceptable. The school has developed a 'buddy' system, student mentoring and other student activities which assist in the support of pupils, and which encourages a culture of peer respect and support. In each class, teachers regularly recap on the anti-bullying policy with the pupils.

Also, at assembly the anti-bullying policy is spoken about regularly. A copy of the anti-bullying policy is displayed on the school's website and anti-bullying statements are prominently displayed around the school. Each year we also celebrate our anti-bullying and anti-racism week, which incorporates circle times, dramas, art competitions, slogans, friendship building strategies etc.

Encouraging pupils to report bullying

As a school we encourage pupils to report incidents of bullying which have happened to themselves or to others. We believe that there are no innocent by-standers. As a staff we try to instil a sense of confidence in our pupils to report incidents of bullying and to understand that by doing so they are acting responsibly. We try to ensure that pupils know who to tell and how to tell – e.g.

- Direct approach to teacher
- Hand notes up with homework
- Post a note in the anti-bullying box
- Get a parent / friend to tell on your behalf
- Administer a confidential questionnaire once a term to all pupils
- Ensure that by-standers understand the importance of telling if they witness bullying
- Encouraging parents to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied
- Ensuring that access to technology is strictly monitored in school as is the use of pupils' mobile phones

Implementation of Curricula

The following programmes/steps will be used in Scoil Choilm CNS in educating pupils to deal with bullying incidents:

- The SPHE/RSE/Stay Safe curriculums will be taught to all classes with age-appropriate language for all pupils.
- There will be CPD for staff delivering these programmes
- Circle time will be widely used in all classes at all levels
- Lessons specifically on anti-bullying and positive self-esteem will be taught at all class levels

Links to other policies

This anti-bullying policy is also linked to:

- The school's Code of Behaviour
- The Child Protection Policy
- The Acceptable Use Policy
- The RSE Policy

6. Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame). In our school we recognise that children are learning how to relate to one another in a respectful manner. Our aim is to help the children in our school to develop these skills and to become good citizens.

The school always seeks to have a fair and consistent approach to investigating and dealing with bullying. Every effort will be made to ensure that all parties involved understand this approach from the outset.

Reporting bullying behaviour

- Any pupil or parent / guardian may bring a bullying incident to the attention of any teacher in the school.
- All incidents of bullying pertaining to pupils in Scoil Choilm CNS will be investigated by school personnel. Parents should not try to deal with bullying incidents themselves or contact any parties involved. Parents should never approach or chastise another child in relation to incidents pertaining to the school.

- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated, and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, SNAs, bus escorts, caretakers, traffic wardens or cleaners must report any incident of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

Investigating and dealing with incidents: Style of approach

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
- Parents/guardians 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.
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.
- Where possible incidents should be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information this way.
- 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 for dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
- If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about the other's statements.
- Each member of the group should be supported through the possible pressure which they may face from other members of the group after the interview by the teacher.
- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents/ guardians of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken. The school will give parents the opportunity to discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the support provided to the pupils.
- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how they are in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
- It will also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and their parents/guardians) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents/ guardians and the school.

Follow up and recording

- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:
 - Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased
 - Whether any of the issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable
 - Whether the relationship between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable
 - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents, guardians or the school principal

- Follow up meetings with the relevant parties involved should be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together later if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.
- Where a parent or guardian is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent or guardian will be referred to the school's complaints procedures.
- If a parent or guardian has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and are still not satisfied, they will be advised of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Recording of Bullying behaviour

It is our school policy that all recording of incidents of bullying must be done in an objective and factual manner. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

Informal pre-determination that bullying has occurred

- All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. If an incident of bullying is brought to the attention of an SNA or ancillary member of staff, they must bring the incident to the attention of the relevant teacher – explaining that they feel it may be an incident of bullying and that it may need to be investigated.
- While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher must keep a written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding the same.
- The relevant teacher must inform the principal of all incidents being investigated.

Formal Stage 1 – determination that bullying has occurred

- 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.
- All written records must be stored and retained carefully by the relevant teacher.

Formal Stage 2

The relevant teacher must use the recording template to record the bullying behaviour in all incidents and as a means of discussing it and reporting it to the principal. A copy of the recording template must be kept by the relevant teacher and a copy given to the principal. The recording template will be kept in a special file by the principal. This information will be retained by the school for 7 years.

Summary of intervention strategies used in our school

- Teacher interviews with all pupils
- Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress – this may be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process.
- Working with parents / guardians to support school interventions
- No blame approaches
- Circle Time

Sanctions for dealing with bullying behaviour:

- The parents of both parties will be called in individually to discuss the bullying incidents.
- The relevant teachers and principal will speak to the child who has engaged in bullying and explain that they are in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy.

- Every effort will be made to try to get the child who has been engaged in the bullying behaviour to empathise and see the situation from the perspective of the child who has been bullied.
- The relevant teachers and principal will keep a record of all incidents.
- Parents will be informed that a written record of the bullying incidents will be kept by the school
- Sanctions will be put in place to deal with the child who has engaged in bullying such as:
 - ❖ Loss of school privileges
 - ❖ Suspension & or expulsion – depending on the severity of the case.
 - ❖ The child who has engaged in bullying behaviour must sign a covenant that they will never engage in these behaviours again.
 - ❖ They must write a letter of apology to the child who has been bullied and to the principal and their class teacher before they are allowed return to school, or their classroom.
 - ❖ The student who has bullied must report into the student support system within the school
 - ❖ The child who has been bullied will be supported by the school through the school's student support system.
 - ❖ The teacher who is monitoring behaviour in the student support system will report back regularly to the principal.

Informing the Board of Management:

- The principal will report all bullying and racism to the Board of Management at each meeting.
- Annually, the Board will complete Appendix 4 to review Anti-Bullying & Anti-Racism procedures in Scoil Choilm CNS

Anti- Bullying & Anti-Racism Inspectorate Reviews:

- The school are aware of the Departmental Anti-Bullying & Anti-Racism reviews and will present all necessary files to the inspectorate on arrival.

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

- The school will provide in-school support and opportunities will be provided for pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and to build resilience for example:
 - Student Support Programme
 - Buddy / peer mentoring system
 - Group work such as Circle Time
- If pupils require counselling or further supports, the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise this. This may be for the pupils affected by bullying or the pupil involved in the bullying behaviour.
- It is important that pupils understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

8. Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils

The school management confirms that there is appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

9. Review/Ratification/Communication

- This policy was created, ratified, and communicated in May 2014.
- This policy will be presented to all teaching staff annually in September.
- This policy was reviewed in November 2021 and will be reviewed again in June 2023 or sooner if necessary.

Signed: *Laura Maher*

Date: November 22nd 2021

Principal (Ms. Laura Maher)

Signed: *John Walsh*

Date: November 22nd 2021

Chairperson of BOM (Mr. John Walsh)

4.4.1 Template for recording alleged bullying behaviour

1. Name of pupil being allegedly bullied and class group

Name:	Class:	Class Teacher:	Room No:
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2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in alleged bullying behaviour

Name:	Class:	Class Teacher:	Room No:
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3. Who reported this behaviour/ concern? (Tick relevant box/es)	
Pupil concerned	<input type="checkbox"/>
Another pupil	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Location of incident (Tick relevant box/es)	
Playground	<input type="checkbox"/>
Classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corridor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Toilets	<input type="checkbox"/>
School Bus	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comment:

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

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6. Type of alleged bullying behaviour (tick relevant box/es)

Physical Aggression	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cyber-bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>
Damage to Property	<input type="checkbox"/>	Intimidation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Isolation/Exclusion	<input type="checkbox"/>	Malicious Gossip	<input type="checkbox"/>
Name Calling	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. Brief description of alleged bullying behaviour and its impact

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9. Details of actions taken

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Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date _____

Date submitted to Principal _____