

Policy on Bullying

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.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour do not fall within the definition of bullying and will 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.

It is important that the use of the word 'bullying' is reserved for real cases of bullying in order not to diminish the seriousness of this behaviour.

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 Clonmellon 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 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 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.
- 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.

Education and Prevention Strategies

The education and prevention strategies that will be used by the school are as follows:

- Pupils will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through curricular and extra-curricular activities.
- Initiatives and programmes will be used to develop pupils' awareness and understanding of bullying, including its causes and effects. e.g. Friendship week, classroom reporting box, SPHE programme (including antibullyingcampaign.ie, Anti-bullying initiative (ABI)), Stay Safe, RSE, visiting speakers. Teachers will use the SPHE curriculum, Stay Safe Programme, and the RSE programme to influence attitudes to bullying behaviour in a positive manner.
- Prevention and awareness raising measures will also deal explicitly with cyber bullying. These will include educating pupils on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while on-line and developing a culture of reporting any concerns about cyber-bullying. This is an integral part of the SPHE programme.
- The needs of children with disabilities or SEN will be given special attention. There will be a focus 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 as central.
- We will aim to raise awareness and understanding of what bullying is and how we deal with it among the whole school community.
- In all other curricular areas and informally throughout the year teachers will also aim 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.

Investigation of Bullying

The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are the class teachers concerned.

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:

- (i) 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);
- (ii) 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;
- (iii) All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It will 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;
- (iv) Non-teaching staff such as the secretary, SNAs, caretaker, will be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;
- (v) 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;
- (vi) It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset;
- (vii) Teachers will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents

- of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents;
- (viii) Incidents will be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
 - (ix) All interviews will 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 in this way;
 - (x) When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This will be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner;
 - (xi) If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved will 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 each other's statements;
 - (xii) Each member of a group will be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher;
 - (xiii) Those involved may be asked to write down their account of the incident(s);
 - (xiv) In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy). The school will give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils;
 - (xv) Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts will be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;
 - (xvi) It will also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school;
 - (xvii) Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved will 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. This can have a therapeutic effect;
 - (xviii) In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it will be recorded by the relevant teacher in the recording template at [Appendix 3](#)
 - (xix) In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher will, as part of her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:
 - Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
 - Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
 - Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable; and
 - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal;
 - (xx) Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents will be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.

Procedures for recording bullying behaviour

- (i) While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated and

dealt with by the class teacher, the teacher will use her professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same;

- (ii) If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher will keep appropriate written records which will assist her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- (iii) The relevant teacher will use the recording template at [Appendix 3](#) to record the bullying behaviour in cases where she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred. It will be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal. It should also be noted that the timeline for recording bullying behaviour in the recording template at Appendix 3 does not in any way preclude the relevant teacher from consulting the Principal or Deputy Principal at an earlier stage in relation to a case.
- (iv) Bullying behaviour can be part of a continuum of behaviour rather than a stand-alone issue and in some cases behaviour may escalate beyond that which can be described as bullying to serious physical or sexual assault or harassment. Serious instances of bullying behaviour will, in accordance with the Children First and [the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools](#), be referred to the HSE Children and Family Services and/or Gardaí as appropriate.

7. Supports

To support pupils affected by bullying teachers will:

- Help the child with making new friends i.e. through seating arrangements, cooperative games, paired working in class, buddy system.
- Make sure the child knows that they have the right to ask for help, and that they know who to ask for help in different situations, like a teacher or a nearby parent.
- Help the child to learn assertiveness skills, like learning to say 'No!' and to display more confident body language through SPHE, circle time, Stay Safe programme.
- Act out some role plays, so the child can practise what to do when confronted with bullying.
- Encourage a child to hide their feelings from bullies – if a child can look calm, neutral or bored, they are less likely to be bullied.
- Encourage a child to talk about their feelings at home, or somewhere they feel safe.
- Help a child to rebuild their self-esteem by giving them opportunities to do things that build their confidence and make them feel good about themselves.
- Pay special attention to these children to ensure they get special support during friendship week.

To support pupils involved in bullying behaviour teachers will:

- Provide opportunities to increase feelings of self-worth.
- Through role play and circle time teach tolerance and empathy for others.
- Use cooperative games, paired learning buddy systems to help develop respect for other people's feelings.
- Use friendship week to help these children develop empathy and respect for others.

8. 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.

9. 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.

10. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 22/03/2011, reviewed 03/11/2016 , 03/12/2018, 18/05/2021, 22-06-2022

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

12. 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 (or where none exists, be otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) 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:

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date:

Appendix 2 Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate

The following are some practical tips for immediate actions that can be taken to help build a positive school culture and climate and to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour.

- Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.
- Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.
- Catch them being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- 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 a disability or SEN.
- Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent. Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.
- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.
- Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use.
- Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.
- Actively involve parents and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media.
- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school. Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.
- All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- Ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.
- School staff can get pupils to help them to identify bullying “hot spots” and “hot times” for bullying in the school.
- Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas, changing rooms, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision.
- Hot times again tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when pupils are in the playground/school yard or moving classrooms.
- Support the work of the student council.

Appendix 3 Template for recording bullying behaviour

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name _____ Class _____

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

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| |

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

| | |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Pupil concerned | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other Pupil | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Parent | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Teacher | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other | <input type="checkbox"/> |

4. Location of incidents (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"/> |

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

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6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) *

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|---------------------|--------------------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| 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 | Other (specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

8. Brief Description of 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/Deputy Principal _____

* **Note:** The categories listed in the tables 3, 4 & 6 are suggested and schools may add to or amend these to suit their own circumstances.

Appendix 4 Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual review of the school’s anti-bullying policy and its implementation. The following checklist must be used for this purpose. The checklist is an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. In order to complete the checklist, an examination and review involving both quantitative and qualitative analysis, as appropriate across the various elements of the implementation of the school’s anti-bullying policy will be required.

Yes /No

| | |
|--|--|
| Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools</i> ? | |
| Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents’ association? | |
| Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)? | |
| Is the Board satisfied that school staff are sufficiently familiar with the policy and procedures to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy and procedures in their day to day work? | |
| Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils? | |
| Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies? | |
| Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented? | |
| Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined? | |
| Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy? | |
| Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal? | |
| Has the Board discussed how well the school is handling all reports of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and not therefore included in the Principal’s periodic report to the Board? | |
| Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school’s handling of bullying incidents? | |
| Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school’s handling of a bullying situation? | |
| Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school’s handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed? | |
| Has the data available from cases reported to the Principal (by the bullying recording template) been analysed to identify any issues, trends or patterns in bullying behaviour? | |
| Has the Board identified any aspects of the school’s policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement? | |
| Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement? | |

Signed _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date _____

Signed _____
Principal

Date _____

Notification regarding the Board of Management’s annual review of the anti-bullying policy

To: _____

The Board of Management of Clonmellon NS wishes to inform you that:

- The Board of Management’s annual review of the school’s anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of 18/05/2021
- This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in [Appendix 4](#) of the Department’s *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Signed _____
(Chairperson, Board of Management)

Date: _____

Signed _____

Principal