

Anti-Bullying Policy Gaelscoil Chill Mhantáin

- 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 Gaelscoil Chill Mhantáin 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.
- 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 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 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.

- 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.

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: (See Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

- The Class Teacher
- The Deputy Principal
- The Principal

5 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*):

- The school will promote positive habits of self respect, self discipline and responsibility among the students of the school by the implementation of the Religious Curriculum, Stay Safe programme and the Social, Personal and Health Education programmes and the Code of Behaviour.
- The students are made aware of the school policy and the need to look after the safety and care of other students and are encouraged to do so.
- Bullying behaviour can flourish in an atmosphere of fear and secrecy therefore the students will be encouraged to tell of any incidents of bullying that may occur in the school. It will be instilled in them that this is the correct and only responsible course of action in this case. The school will use the yellow box scheme so that pupils may tell of cases of bullying in confidence.
- The Acceptable Use Policy with regards the internet is in use in the school.
- The pupils knowledge and awareness of bullying will be enhanced by a yearly Anti-Bullying week and by the invitation of experts to speak to the pupils on the dangers of the internet.
- The Gaelscoil will take particular care of at-risk students and use its monitoring system to provide early intervention when and if necessary and the school will respond to the needs, fears and anxieties of individual members of the school community in a sensitive manner.
- Bullying will be discussed and monitored on a regular basis at staff meetings where staff will evaluate individual cases.
- Non-teaching staff such as caretakers, secretaries, SNA's, cleaners etc. will be encouraged to be vigilant and to report any incident of bullying behaviour they may witness.
- Serious incidents of inappropriate behaviour in the yard, if witnessed by the teacher on yard duty or when reported to the teacher on yard duty, will be logged in the 'Accident and Incidence Book'. This book will be solely for accidents and incidents occurring in the yard. All reported cases of bullying will be investigated by the teacher in a way that takes into account the feelings of the child. Teachers will be understanding, calm, and unbiased when dealing with each student.
- All incidents of bullying behaviour reported to the class teacher will be noted by the class teacher.

6 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*)

- If parents have concerns about their child being bullied they should inform the class teacher.
- All allegations of bullying behaviour will be noted and investigated by the class teacher. If the teacher suspects that bullying occurred, the Principal/Deputy Principal should be informed.
- Incidents of serious inappropriate behaviour witnessed by the teachers on the yard or reported to them in the school yard will be noted in the Accident and Incident book by the teacher on the yard.
- All non-teaching staff and parents have responsibility to report allegations of bullying to the teaching staff.
- Parents will be informed at the earliest opportunity of bullying incidents involving their children.
- The school will use both the 'No Blame Approach' and the 'Support Group Approach' when investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.
- Teachers should be understanding, calm and unbiased when investigating bullying. All students connected with the incident should be interviewed to get the complete overview of the events. All interviews should be conducted in a manner that takes into account the feelings of the child. Teachers investigating bullying behaviour incidents should keep written record of their discussions with those involved. It may be also appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident/incidents.

- If a group is involved all members of the groups should be interviewed alone and then as a group. All members of the group should be helped to deal with any peer pressure that may arise from other members of the group.
 - The Gaelscoil will encourage students to have an atmosphere of openness thus ensuring any inappropriate behaviour is immediately passed onto a teacher.
 - If it is found that bullying behaviour has taken place efforts will be made to help the child/children behind the bullying behaviour and to understand the side of the victim. If it is found that bullying behaviour has taken place those involved shall be informed that they have broken the schools 'Code of Behaviour' and 'Anti-Bullying Policy'. The school will be understanding and endeavour to support both the victim and bully.
 - Where bullying behaviour has been established to have taken place both sets of parents/guardians shall be informed by the Principal or Teacher as soon as possible. It will be explained to them the approaches and steps to be taken and the reasons for this course of action, thus referring to the Schools Bullying Policy and the Code of Behaviour.
 - A meeting will be arranged, if needed and when the victim is ready, between both parties with a view to reconciliation.
 - The relevant teacher, when determining whether the relevant case has adequately and appropriately addressed, as part of his/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
Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal
 - In cases where the relevant teacher feels that bullying behaviour has ceased or the problem solved after 20 days, he/she will fill out the report form. A copy of this report form will be given to the Principal.
 - In cases of bullying behaviour between adults, this behaviour will be raised between the persons in question first. If no resolution to the problem is agreed it will be raised with the Principal/Deputy Principal then.
 - Where cases of bullying remain unresolved at school, the matter will be referred to the chairperson of the Board of Management according to the procedures outlined in the schools grievance procedure. In cases where no solution can be found having gone through all the steps in accordance with the schools grievance procedure parents will be notified of their right to complain to the Children's Ombudsman.
 - For cases of adult bullying, the procedures as outlined in the INTO Management Body's 'Working Together Procedures and Policies for Positive Staff Relations' should be followed.
- 7 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*):
- 1 The No Blame Approach to Bullying
 - 2 The Support Group Approach to Bullying
- 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 04/03/14 .

- 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 (where one exists). 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 (where one exists). 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)

Signed: _____
 (Principal)

Date: _____

Date: _____

Review:

Implemented	
Reviewed	October 2014
To be reviewed	June 2015

