

Coláiste Phádraig C.B.S.
Anti-bullying Policy

Coláiste Phádraig CBS is committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe learning environment for all our students, staff, parents and visitors. Bullying, in any form, is unacceptable and will not be tolerated in our school community. All students are obliged to respect the rights of others and to uphold the school's commitment on harassment and discrimination at all times. Students shall not infringe the rights of others by engaging in any conduct, which causes harassment or discrimination.

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 Phádraig C.B.S. 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.
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* (see Appendix 2)

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

- At the outset any staff member either teaching or on supervision in whose presence a suspected bullying incident has occurred must firstly investigate the incident to establish if bullying has actually occurred.
- Following the initial investigation and if the staff member feels that a bullying incident has occurred, a report is filled out and the incident is then reported up the chain of referral as appropriate. A copy of the report must also be given to the Principal.
- Principal, Year Heads, Guidance Counsellor, Tutors and class teachers also have a vital role in any effective anti-bullying strategy and will be kept informed at all times as to the progress of any investigation.

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:

- The school confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour. In particular in 'hot spots' and 'hot times' i.e. school yard, corridors, moving classrooms etc.
- The school affirms its commitment to the use of the SPHE, RE, RSE, and CSPE curriculum to provide opportunities to explore bullying as well as inter-related areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships and to enhance students to recognise and respond to bullying.
- The RSE programme provides opportunities to explore and discuss areas such as human sexuality and relationships which has particular relevance to identity-based bullying, including homophobic and transgender bullying.

- Support will be sought from the Student Council, Prefects and Gluais team in helping school personnel deal with bullying behaviour.
- All students are encouraged to develop a positive sense of self worth and self esteem during their time at the school.
- All anti-bullying programmes, initiatives and strategies strive to build empathy, respect and resilience in students.
- Prevention and awareness raising measures will be sensitive to the type of bullying and take into account the age of the students involved.
- Procedures will be such that all members of staff understand what bullying is and how the school deals with bullying behaviour.
- Inservice will be provided for all staff on the subject of bullying, its effects and the practical implementation of our school policy.
- Students are encouraged to recognise, reject and report bullying behaviour.
- Parents are encouraged to be vigilant in watching out for the signs of bullying and to report any suspicion of bullying they may have to the school.
- In order to raise awareness of bullying and its effects, the school will run an Anti-Bullying week each year.
- Anti-Bullying posters will be placed in key areas around the school.
- Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.

6. Process & Procedures

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:

- The primary aim in 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); Circular 45/2013
- 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;
- All reports of bullying must 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; Class Teachers/Tutors may also request statements be taken from the class as a whole.
- Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers, cleaners will be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to subject teachers, the Year Head or the relevant teacher.
- 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.

The investigation:

- The primary aim for the relevant teacher 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);
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.
- Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
- 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;
- 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; it may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s);
- If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first. Each member may be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements; Statements are usually read back to each member.
- Each member of a group shall be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teaching community;

Action to be taken:

- If an incident of bullying is reported to any staff member or if any staff member observes an incident of bullying they must fill out the 'Bullying Record Form'. See Appendix 1.
- If a member of staff observes the bullying incident they must carry out the initial investigation.
- The staff member passes their report onto the Year Head.
- In cases where it has been determined by the Relevant Teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the perpetrator may be asked to sign a promise that the bullying behaviour will stop. If that promise is forthcoming and is honoured there will be no penalty and that will be the end of the matter. It should be made clear to him how he is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
- If a pupil has signed such a promise but then chooses to break that promise and continue the bullying behaviour, the parents of the parties involved will be contacted at this stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy).
- Then the parents will be requested to countersign the promise. Breach of this additional promise by further bullying behaviour is regarded as a very grave matter and a serious sanction will be imposed by the school authorities, the student may be suspended from school or the case may be referred to the Board of Management who may consider more serious sanctions up to and including expulsion.

- In serious cases the school's code of behaviour may be invoked immediately.
- It shall be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation every effort will be made to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved. Where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school;

Follow-up:

- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should 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. The Guidance Counsellor may be asked to become involved in this process by the Relevant Teacher or Year Head for support for the parties involved.
- Pastoral care team may also be informed for extra support.
- The Tutor and Year Heads will provide support for all parties.
- Those who have been found to have engaged in bullying will be encouraged to recognise the inappropriateness of such behaviour and the seriousness of its effects on others.
- Further intervention may be deemed appropriate when instances of bullying occur. This may involve counselling by outside professionals (e.g. NEPS; NEWB). The objective of such intervention will be the restoration of confidence and self-esteem in both perpetrator and victim.
- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the Relevant Teacher and Year Head must, as part of their professional judgement, take the following factors into account:
 1. Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
 2. Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
 3. Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable;
 4. Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal.
- If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must use the recording template at **Appendix 1** to record the bullying behavior in the following circumstances:
 - (a) In cases where he/she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred; and
 - (b) Where the school has decided as part of its anti-bullying policy that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

Appeals:

- Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures;

- In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

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. Support

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

- All teachers of students affected by bullying will be briefed by the Deputy Principal/Year Head and asked to keep a watching eye on the student. Any sanctions given will be included in the briefing.
- Regular contact will be maintained with all students affected by bullying, until satisfied that the situation has returned to normal.
- If pupils require 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 or involved in the bullying behaviour.
- Pupils should 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 Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behavior 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.

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 and provided to the Parents' Council. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and to the patron and the Department.

Signed: Mary Edel Ryan Date: **September 5th 2024**
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: Tom O' Meara Date: **September 5th 2024**
(Principal)

Date of next review: **September 5th, 2025**