Anti Bullying Policy

NEWPORT CONVENT

Creid Ionat Féin

Convent Primary School, Newport

Anti-Bullying Policy

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 Convent Primary 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) 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;

(b) Effective leadership

(c) A school-wide approach

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

(e) 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;

(f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils

(g) Supports for staff

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

(i) 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.*

The list of examples below is non exhaustive, and schools may wish to add behaviours which reflect their own circumstances.

Examples of bullying behaviours

General behaviours which apply to all	- Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc. - Physical aggression eg hitting, pushing, shoving, hair pulling etc - 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 - Intimidation - Insulting or offensive gestures - The "look" - Invasion of personal space - Exclusion - A combination of any of the types listed.

Cyber	• **Denigration**: Spreading rumors, 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 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 communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/ Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles • Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures • Abusive posts on any form of communication technology

Identity Based Behaviours

Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).

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 • Isolation & exclusion • 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"
Sexual	• Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching • Harassment
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

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):

Refer to section 6.8.3. and 6.8.4 in the Procedures.

The Relevant Teachers in this school are:
Principal Deputy Principal All teachers

Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying, 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*):

School-wide approach

- We take a school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community and highlighting the unacceptability of bullying behaviour. Pupils will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions with staff parents and others.
- Whole staff professional development on bullying has been delivered and we will continue to ensure that all staff develops an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it-prevention and intervention.
- Professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teacher(s)
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community. The school accesses annual training for parents on internet safety and cyber bullying from Microsoft professionals, and engages with the Garda SPHE programme.
- Supervision and monitoring on a rota basis of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra- curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school and internet use.
- Involvement of the student council in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. We have a co-operative learning strategy for promoting reading/literacy based on a Buddy system, and a Children helping Children system in the yard whereby older students help younger peers. We also use the Cool Calm and Collected Programme for building self esteem
- The school's anti-bullying policy is promoted on the school website.
- Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should 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.
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.:
    - o Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
    - o Hand note up with homework.
    - o There is a suggestion box in every classroom which pupils can use to disclose issues of concern. This is monitored by the student council
    - o Administer a confidential questionnaire once a term to all pupils if the need arises.
    - o Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.

- We encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied. Bullying and cyber bullying are issues which are highlighted with parents and at the parent association AGM.
- The development of an Acceptable Use Policy in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored, as is the pupils' use of mobile phones.

Implementation of curriculum

- The full implementation of the SPHE curriculum and the revised Stay Safe Programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes, e.g. Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme.

- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardai, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying or a professional company.
- 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.

Links to other policies
- This policy is linked to other school policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to bullying, e.g. Code of Behaviour, Child Protections policy, Supervision of pupils, Acceptable Use policy, Attendance, Sporting activities.

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):

6.8.9.   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);

The school's procedures will be consistent with the following approach.
Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s)) understand this approach from the outset.

Reporting bullying behaviour

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in 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, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must report any incidents 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 (relevant)teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) 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 in this way;

- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the parties involved should 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 should give parent(s)/guardian(s) an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports 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 he/she is 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 must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parent(s)/guardian(s)) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) 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 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 parent(s)/guardian(s)s or the school Principal or Deputy Principal
- 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.
- Where a parent(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
- In the event that a parent(s)/guardian(s) has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Pupils.

Recording of bullying behaviour

It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner.

The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

Informal-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.
- The school in consultation with the relevant teacher/s should develop a protocol for the storage of all records retained by the relevant teacher.

Formal-Appendix 3 (From DES Procedures)

The relevant teacher must use the recording template at **Appendix 3** to record the bullying behaviour 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 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.
Serious or recidivist incidents of physical, verbal or psychological bullying fall under this category.

When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal. Due consideration needs to be given to where these records are kept, who has access to them, and how long they will be retained.
Records will be kept securely in the principal's office

Established intervention strategies
- Teacher interviews with all pupils
- Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process
- Working with parent(s)/guardian(s)s to support school interventions
- No Blame Approach
- Circle Time
- Restorative interviews
- Restorative conferencing
- Implementing sociogram questionnaires
- Peer mediation where suitable training has been given

Procedures for dealing with bullying

1. Initial report/disclosure of bullying behaviour

Procedure	Support and/or sanction *may* include
Investigate incident-speak with students separately and try to resolve the issue using an established intervention strategy	Serious talk with student(s) re effects of their behaviour.
Challenge the behaviour as being unacceptable.	Verbal warning. Student/s involved warned to stop.
Always consult with appropriate colleagues or management	Seek verbal agreement re future behaviour.
Inform parents at an early stage	Outline a fair outcome *if appropriate:*
Keep a record	e.g. an apology, return of property etc.
Teacher will follow up progress with: victim and bully, bystanders or others involved.	
If the incident has not been resolved in 20 days record the behaviour on the Appendix 3 record form	

2. Subsequent report /disclosure

Action taken by	Procedure	Support and/or sanction *may* include:
Relevant teacher.	Incident investigated by the relevant teacher and/or principal.	Serious talk with the student re: behaviour and future behaviour.
	Both sets of parents informed	Sign written agreement re future behaviour with parents present.
	Keep a record.	Parents/Guardians sign written agreement re future behaviour.
	Follow up progress with victim and bully, bystanders or others involved.	Referral to resource teacher or other supports.
		Detention /other agreed sanction from school's Code of Behaviour
		Monitor future behaviour.

3. Where bullying behaviour persists / serious incident of bullying

Action taken by	Procedure	Support and/or Sanction
Relevant teacher, Principal or Deputy Principal involved	Parents and student meet with Principal / Deputy Principal.	Detention / Suspension / other agreed sanction from school's Code of Behaviour.
The incident may be referred to the Board of Management at the discretion of the Principal.	Use established intervention strategies	Parents are met and conditions set regarding student's future behaviour.
	Formal appendix 3 Record kept.	External support re behaviour/Counselling offered
	Follow up progress with victim and bully, bystanders or others involved and continue to monitor the situation.	Referral to child psychologist/ NEPS
		Contact with other support agencies e.g. re anger management
		The future of the student in the school may be considered.

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows
(see Section 6.8.16 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools) :

- All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying
  to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and so-
  cial skills and build resilience e.g.
    - Pastoral care system
    - Children helping children
      Socially speaking resource
      Talkabout resource
      Building self esteem
    - Group work such as circle time

- If pupils require counselling of further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the
  appropriate agencies to organise same. Eg NEPS or CAMHS. This may be for the pupil affect-
  ed by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.

- Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bul-
  lying 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 behaviour and to facilitate early
intervention where possible.

Supervision of the school is organised on a rota basis for : break times ; lunchtime; and dismissal
- In relation to Acceptable Use Policy in the school are the following issues addressed:
    - All Internet sessions are supervised by a teacher?
    - The school regularly monitors pupils' Internet usage?
    - Pupils have been instructed to use only approved class accounts for email purposes and to
      use these only under teacher supervision?
    - Pupils are instructed to access only those chat rooms, discussion forums and messaging or
      other electronic communication fora that have been approved by the school?
(Note that the Schools Broadband Programme has blocked all social networking sites on the basis that they
waste time and take up too much of the bandwidth which is been provided for educational purposes only).
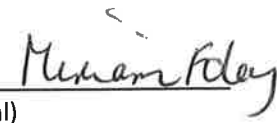
9. Prevention of Harassment

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 10th December 2014. It was updated and reviewed annually. Most recent review October 2024.

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel and published on the school website.

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 is sent to school personnel, via Aladdin.

Signed: _Patrick O'Toole_
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _Miriam Foley_
(Principal)

Date: 09th October 2024

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Date of next review: October 2024