

ANTI- BULLYING POLICY
SCOIL CHAISTRÍONA SENIOR
2022/2023

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 Scoil Chaitríona Senior 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, 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.

The following form of bullying was included in the 2021 review:

- Gaslighting often develops gradually, making it difficult for a person to detect. techniques a person may use to gaslight someone include:
- Countering: This describes a person questioning someone's memories. They may say things such as, "you never remember things accurately," or "are you sure? You have a bad memory."
- Withholding: When someone withholds, they refuse to engage in a conversation. A person using this technique may pretend not to understand someone so that they do not have to respond to them. For example, they might say, "I do not know what you are talking about," or "you are just trying to confuse me."
- Trivialising: This occurs when a person belittles or disregards the other person's feelings. They may accuse them of being too sensitive or of overreacting when they have valid concerns and feelings.
- Denial: Denial involves a person pretending to forget events or how they occurred. They may deny having said or done something or accuse someone of making things up.
- Diverting: With this technique, a person changes the focus of a discussion and questions the other person's credibility instead. For example, they might say, "that is just another crazy idea you got from your friends."
- Stereotyping: An article in the [American Sociological Review](#) states that a person using gaslighting techniques may intentionally use negative stereotypes of a person's gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, nationality, or age to manipulate them. For example, they may tell a female that people will think she/he is irrational or crazy if she/he seeks help for abuse.
- While anyone can experience gaslighting, it is especially common in intimate relationships and in social interactions where there is an imbalance of power
- A person who is on the receiving end of this behaviour is experiencing abuse and this should be managed under the Anti Bullying Policy.
- Joking around and 'roasts' can become very hurtful when they purposely become personal – meaning that specific traits of the target are being ridiculed. 'Roasting' becomes bullying when it intentionally and repeatedly occurs to the same target against their will – meaning that the individual who is being 'roasted' feels powerless to stop it. (included in SCS Anti Bullying review in 2022)

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 teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:

All teachers are involved at stages 1 and 2 (See point 6 below).

Class teachers are involved at stage 1, the deputy and/or assistant principals are involved at stage 2. The principal is involved at stage 3.

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:

Role of Staff

- The principal and staff exercise constant vigilance in the matter of misbehaviour. Our aim is to prevent misbehaviour. Positive behaviour is always sought, recognised and affirmed
- Any complaints of bullying are dealt with quickly, firmly and fairly.
- The anti-bullying supporting paperwork step guide will be used in cases of reported bullying (Stage 1 and 2 see point 6 below) (Available on the school network in the C_Resources and School Planning: SPHE; Anti-Bullying). (Teachers may use the interview scripts/ templates as a guide and are not obliged to follow the exact wording). Also in the appendices.
- When this fails the matter is referred to the principal using the reporting template
- Awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour is addressed in the classroom, at school assemblies, through pastoral care and other informal occasions when the opportunity arises.
- Pupils are taught skills and encouraged to report any incident of bullying.

- Programmes to be taught include the Webwise and Stay Safe programmes
- Staff should also implement the Anti-Bullying Survey at least once a term
- Modelling of respectful behaviour and language by all staff
- Encouraging students to look out for each other and to be responsible for their own behaviour

Advice for Pupils

- Tell yourself that you do not deserve to be bullied, and that it is **WRONG**.
- Be proud of who you are. It is good to be an individual.
- Stay with a group of friends/people.
- Be assertive – say NO, walk away and tell an adult you trust. You will get immediate support. The teachers will take you seriously and will deal with the incident.
- Fighting back makes things worse– So don't fight back. REPORT to a teacher or parent instead. If you need support, find a friend and both of you speak to the teacher.

IF YOU KNOW SOMEONE IS BEING BULLIED:

- TAKE ACTION – Watching and doing nothing looks as if you are on the side of the bully. It makes the victim feel more unhappy and on their own.
- If you feel you cannot get involved, tell an adult IMMEDIATELY. Teachers will deal with the bully without getting you into trouble.

Advice for Parents

- Parents should be very vigilant if their child is using online communication systems e.g. phones; apps such as Snapchat, WhatsApp, etc; online gaming messages, etc.
- Look for unusual behaviour in your children. They may suddenly not wish to attend school, feel ill regularly, or not complete work to their normal standard, ask for money or begin stealing money.
- Always take an active role in your child's education by enquiring how they are getting on.
- If you feel your child may be a victim of bullying behaviour, inform the school IMMEDIATELY. Your complaint will be taken seriously and appropriate action will follow.
- It is important to advise your child not to fight back. It can make matters worse. Remind your child to say NO, block the sender/walk away and tell an adult s/he trusts.
- Tell your child there is nothing wrong with him/her. It is not his/her fault that they are being bullied.
- Make sure your child is fully aware of the School Policy concerning Bullying, and that they will not be afraid to ask for help;

We will display the school's anti-bullying statement (*Bullying is wrong and is not tolerated in Scoil Chaitriona Senior. We are a telling school.*) in the school. Reminders of aspects of the anti-bullying policy will be included at morning assemblies. (What is bullying? What is not bullying? What to do if you feel you are being bullied? What to do if you see somebody else being bullied?) Poster competition in October during Anti-Bullying Week.

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:

Incidents of Bullying will be dealt with on a staged basis.

Stage 1

All reports of bullying must be dealt with initially by the class teacher.

- When a pupil tells a teacher s/he is being bullied, it is important to gather all of the facts from both sides (What, where, when, who, why?).
- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best to resolve the situation.

- The aim for the class 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).
- Non-teaching staff will be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them to the relevant teacher.
- The teacher should take calm, unemotional, problem-solving approach.
- All sides are listened to separately and notes are taken.
- The notes are brief, factual and should be void of emotional or judgemental language.
- Instances are investigated discretely to avoid public humiliations.
- All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regards to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way. (See Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 6.8.9 page 30-31) for further suggestions.
- It is explained to the alleged bully how hurtful their behaviour is and attempts are made to encourage them to empathise with the alleged victim.
- The child/children involved will be asked to sign "**Pupil Behaviour Promise 1**". Stage 1 lapses at the end of the school/academic year. This promise and all relevant paperwork remains in the child's file.

Stage 2

If this child breaks promise and re-offends then the Deputy Principal or Assistant Principal with the class teacher will interview the child/children again. It is explained to them that this is their second time offending and that they have not committed to their promise. Again attempts will be made to resolve the situation. Once more students will sign the "**Pupil Behaviour Promise 2**". This time this has to be co- signed by their parents. They are now advised that if they break this promise again, they will have a meeting with the principal and their parents in the office and will face discipline.

- Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigations 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.
- Information spoken about at the meeting remains confidential, so that the victim would not be further victimised. (A need to know basis)
- Stage 2 paperwork is placed in the child's file. If a further incidence occurs, this paperwork is taken into account.

Stage 3

If a child breaks their promise twice then the matter is referred to the Principal using the recording template (*Anti bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*). This template will be completed in full and a copy given to the Deputy Principal and Principal. This information will be kept in the child's file. At each Board of Management meeting the Principal will provide a report to the BOM setting out the overall number of bullying cases reported by means of this template and confirmation that all cases are being dealt with in accordance with procedure.

In the event that a teacher or principal becomes aware of a case of severe bullying having taken place, Stage 3 may be immediately applied. Using Restorative Practices,, the principal may take corrective action with an entire class by doing workshops. Working cooperatively, they may develop 'class contracts' or 'class commitments' which include targets, actions, expectations and desired outcomes. This will be shared with parents.

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

Victims

- o Victims are reassured from the outset that they are not to blame.
- o Strategies for restoring self-esteem are explored between the teacher and pupils (at Stage 1) and the teacher and parents/guardians from Stage 2 on.
- o Where deemed necessary, the child in consultation with parents may be referred for counselling.

o Staged approach- class support, school support (as per Continuum -Behavioural, Emotional and Social difficulties- NEPS).

o The parents of the pupils concerned will be advised to contact the local Gardaí if appropriate.

Bullies

o Where deemed necessary, the child in consultation with parents may be referred for counselling. They may need to learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others. Empathy awareness needs to be developed.

o Clinical referral and assessment may be necessary.

o Staged approach - class support, school support (as per *Continuum-Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties*- NEPS)

• In certain cases it may be necessary to invite assistance from formal agencies such as Gardaí, (J.L.O) Health Board, Local Youth Groups etc.

The school cannot be responsible for disagreements between pupils that happen outside the school hours.

This policy shall be taken to be applicable to the ‘Early Bird Club’ from 7.40am to 8.40am Monday to Friday

7. 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.

8. 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 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 minority groups.

9. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 23/10/2023 This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and emailed to parents. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. 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: _____



Scoil Chaitríona Senior

Anti-Bullying Support Paperwork

Appendix 1



7 QUICK STEPS FOR DEALING WITH POSSIBLE BULLYING SITUATIONS

If an incident has taken place that might involve bullying, record whatever details are known by completing "Incident Report Form" (Page 1) and then follow the remaining steps below to investigate and resolve it. Please note that all actions taken to deal with such an incident should be recorded on "Action Taken Form" (Page 2), usually photocopied onto the reverse of Page 1.

Whether there has been an incident or not, to find out if there is bullying taking place, make yourself and at least one colleague familiar with "Information Before Class Survey," headed "Where this school Stands on Bullying" (Page 3)

Visit each class in a year group and

- (a) Explain that you are going to carry out a survey,
- (b) Explain what you have in mind and why, using the key points from Page 3,
- (c) Explain to the pupils that for behaviour to be bullying, things must be happening that are deliberate, hurtful to someone and are repeated over and over again,
- (d) Explain that any pupils found to be involved in bullying will not be punished provided they promise to stop the bullying and keep that promise. (This "Reform, not Blame" approach is necessary so pupils will feel able to give you the information you need. They will usually know if someone is treating others unfairly but may be reluctant to report it, for various reasons, if perpetrators are likely to be punished).
- (e) Explain that the survey is confidential, that nobody will be shown what anyone wrote about what might be going on, (unless it was so bad that the Gardaí had to be told, which is very unlikely) but that they will have to put their names on their questionnaires.

4. Survey all classes in that year group, e.g. all third class groups, using copies of the "Regular Class Survey". This is necessary since bullying might take place in the yard at break time and pupils from other classes might see it. Ask the pupils to put their names on the questionnaires. You can tell them that any pupil who honestly does not know of any bullying taking place they should write "I don't know" on each line of the questionnaire before putting their name on it.

5. Later, read through the questionnaires for evidence of bullying. It is likely that there will be several possible bullying situations mentioned but some may not all actually involve bullying. Remember, to be bullying the behaviour must be deliberate, hurtful and repeated over time.

6. Interview any alleged perpetrators using the "Alleged Bullying Interview" form (Page 11) and the "Bullying Behaviour Checklist" form (Page 12). Those interviewed are reminded that they must be honest in the interview so you can trust their promise to stop and avoid any punishment at the end. Seek clarification at any stage in the interview by asking the pupil to "explain."

7. In the event that there has been bullying taking place, ask the pupil to complete a signed "Pupil Behaviour Promise" form and countersign it. In most cases pupils will keep that promise.

CONGRATULATIONS! YOU HAVE MADE YOUR SCHOOL A SAFER PLACE FOR YOUR PUPILS!

Ideally, anti-bullying awareness raising exercises would also be ongoing throughout the school year so pupils would better understand the nature and unacceptability of bullying, what it is they should avoid doing and be better able to complete the questionnaires.