



Coláiste Mhuire, Askeaton

Anti-Bullying Policy & Procedures

Adopted 12/06/14

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 Mhuire 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 School reserves the right to apply its bullying policy in respect of bullying that occurs at a location, activity, function or programme that is not school related if in the opinion of the principal and/or Board of Management the alleged bullying has created a hostile environment at school for the target of bullying, has infringed on the rights of the target of bullying and/or has materially or substantially disrupted the education process or the orderly operation of the school.

2. The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of students 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 students to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment;
- promotes respectful relationships across the school community; and
- encourages by-standers to take a stand

See Appendix 1, Key elements of a positive school culture and climate, and also Appendix 2, Sample action plan for building a school culture and climate.

(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 students; and
- explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying;

(f) Effective supervision and monitoring of students

(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 intentional 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc. • Physical aggression • 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 • A combination of any of the types listed.
Cyber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

	<p>another person's name</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
<p>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).</p>	
<p>Homophobic and Transgender</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
<p>Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
<p>Relational</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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"
<p>Sexual</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching • Harassment

Special Educational Needs, Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name calling • Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs • Taking advantage of some students' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying • Taking advantage of some students' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues. • Mimicking a person's disability • Setting others up for ridicule
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4. The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows: (see Section 6.8.3. and 6.8.4 in the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

<p>The Relevant Teachers in this school are:</p> <p>Principal</p> <p>Deputy Principal</p> <p>Year heads</p>

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that may be used by the school are as follows (see Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

Education and prevention strategies may include the following:

<p>School-wide approach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community. • The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour. • The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our students through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Students will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions. • Whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develop an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on students' 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 students, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community. • Supervision and monitoring 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. • Involvement of the student council in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Buddy system, mentoring, Lunchtime Pals and other student support activities that can help to support students and encourage a culture of peer respect and support. • Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school-to be included in student
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journals and displayed publicly in classrooms and in common areas of the school.

- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with students and all parent(s)/guardian(s) are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school.
- The implementation of regular whole school awareness measures e.g. a dedicated notice board in the school and classrooms on the promotion of friendship, and bullying prevention; annual Friendship Week and parent(s)/guardian(s) seminars; annual or term or monthly student surveys; regular school or year group assemblies by principal, deputy principal, year heads etc.
- Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way students will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all students that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
- Ensuring that students know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.:
 - Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
 - Hand note up with homework.
 - Make a phone call to the school or to a trusted teacher in the school.
 - Anti-bully or Niggle box?
 - Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
 - Administer a confidential questionnaire once a term to all students.
 - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Identify clear protocols to encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied. The protocol should be developed in consultation with parents.
- 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 students' use of mobile phones.
- The listing of supports currently being used in the school and the identification of other supports available to the school.

Implementation of curricula

- The full implementation of the SPHE and CSPE curricula and the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes
- School wide delivery of lessons on **Relational aggression, Cyber Bullying, Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying, Diversity and Interculturalism**. The school will list the resources related to the SPHE curriculum, and make a list of supports.
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes at primary and post- primary level. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardaí, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying
- The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN students with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all students to respond appropriately.

Links to other policies

- Other policies which are relevant include; Code of Behaviour, Child Protection policy, Supervision of students, Acceptable Use policy, Attendance, Sporting activities.

6. Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour are detailed in Appendix 3: (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

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

- In-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the students affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience e.g.
 - Pastoral care system
 - Buddy / Peer mentoring system
 - Tutor/Year head system
 - Care team / Student Support Team
 - Group work such as circle time
- If students require counselling or further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be for the student affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.

Students should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that incidents of bullying behaviour should be reported to a teacher. **Established intervention strategies may include;**

- Teacher interviews with all students
- Negotiating agreements between students 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) to support school interventions
- No Blame Approach
- Circle Time
- Restorative Practice
- Implementing sociogram questionnaires
- Peer mediation where suitable training has been given

8. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 12/06/14

9. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

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

Signed: *Martin Hawkes*
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: *Norma O'Brien*
(Principal)

Date: 12/06/14

Date: 12/06/14

APPENDIX 1

Key Elements of a positive school culture and climate: (DES Anti-Bullying Procedures)

Area of Focus	Y/N Comment
The school acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment.	
The school acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual and his/her worth as a human being.	
The school promote positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among all its members.	
The school prohibits vulgar, offensive, sectarian or other aggressive behaviour or language by any of its members.	
The school has a clear commitment to promoting equity in general and gender equity in particular in all aspects of its functioning.	
The school has the capacity to change in response to pupil's needs.	
The school identifies aspects of curriculum through which positive and lasting influences can be exerted towards forming students' attitudes and values.	
The school takes particular care of 'at risk' students and uses its monitoring systems to facilitate early intervention where necessary and it responds to the needs, fears or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner.	
The school recognises the need to work in partnership with and keep parents informed on procedures to improve relationships on a school-wide basis.	
The school recognises the role of parents in equipping the pupil with a range of life-skills.	
The school recognises the role of other community agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying.	
The school promotes habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the interdependence of people in groups and communities	
The school promotes qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among all its members both in school and out of school	
Staff members share a collegiate responsibility, under the direction of the Principal, to act in preventing bullying/aggressive behaviour by any member of the school community	

APPENDIX 2

Sample Action Plan to promote a positive school culture and climate

Target: To develop practices to ensure a positive school culture and climate is prioritised across the school

Appendix 2 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures has been referenced to develop our Action Plan

Tasks: What steps do we need to take	Who will do it?	When will it be done by?	Complete Ongoing Deferred
As a staff we will model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times	All staff		Ongoing
We will explicitly teach students at all class levels what respectful language and behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school	All staff		Ongoing
We will engage in CPD events in relation to Anti-Bullying and also set aside planning time as a staff for this area	All Staff	June 2014 and ongoing	
We will agree key respect messages and display them in classrooms, assembly areas and around the school, The students will be involved in the development of these messages and they will be cross referenced with the Code of Behaviour	Staff representatives per class level		Ongoing
We will consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school- this includes homophobic and racist language that is belittling of students with a disability or SEN	All Staff		Ongoing

APPENDIX 3

Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

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*):

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 students, 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 will 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 students 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 will be 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 students concerned. Students 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.
- If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first.
- Each member of a group will be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after the interview by the teacher.

It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s)

- In cases where it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parent(s)/guardian(s) 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 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 students.

- 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.
- It will also be made clear to all involved (each set of students 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 will, 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) or the school Principal or Deputy Principal
- 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.
- 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 will advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Recording of bullying behaviour

Records: Protocol

- Access to the records is open to school management and relevant teachers only.
- Records will be retained, in a secure location, for a period of up to five years after the student leaves the school.

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- pre-determination that bullying has occurred

- Staff will keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. All incidents will be reported to the relevant teacher.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher will keep a written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.
- The relevant teacher will inform the principal of all incidents being investigated.

Informal-determination that bullying has occurred

- If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher will 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 will develop a protocol for the storage of all records retained by the relevant teacher.

Formal-Appendix 4 (From DES Procedures)

The relevant teacher will use the recording template at Appendix 4 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) in the following circumstances bullying behaviour will be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

- Where the bullying behaviour poses an immediate risk to the health and safety of another student/s or members of the school community
- Where the “recipient” has disclosed that he/she is particularly vulnerable and at “risk”
- Where the alleged “bully” discloses that he/she is at risk

When the recording template is used, it will be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal.

APPENDIX 4

Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour

1. Name of student being bullied: _____ Class _____

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

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

Students concerned	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Students	<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))

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 community	Other (specify)

8. Brief Description of the 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 _____

APPENDIX 5

Checklist as an aid for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation

The Board of Management (the Board) will undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation. The following checklist will be used for this purpose.

Yes /No

Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that complies with the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools</i> ?	
Has the school published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	
Has the school ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	
Is the Board satisfied that relevant 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 school 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 prevention and education strategies that are reasonably practical been implemented?	
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	
Is the Board satisfied that 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 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 school identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	
Has the school put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	

