

<p style="text-align: center;">Coláiste Chiaráin, Leixlip Community School Anti-Bullying Policy: 2023 Review</p>

Relationship to Mission Statement

The community of the school works in a holistic manner to ensure that dependence is gradually replaced by responsibility for self, society and the world. The dignity of each student, staff member and parent is honored and reflected in school policies and structures, including this policy.

Coláiste Chiaráin seeks to:

- enable each student to develop her/his full potential.
- provide a safe and secure environment for learning.
- promote respect for the diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life in society.
- promote habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the interdependence of people in groups and communities.
- take particular care of at-risk students and use its monitoring system to provide early intervention when/if necessary and respond to the needs, fears and anxieties of individual students in a sensitive manner.

Rationale: The purpose of this policy is to protect all members of our school community from being bullied and to ensure that effective remedial steps are taken where bullying arises.

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behavior guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of Coláiste Chiaráin has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behavior.

This policy fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* which were published in September 2013 and is in line with Cinealtás, the Government action plan on Bullying December 2022. Our policy is rooted in the four key principles of this plan:

- Prevention
- Support
- Community
- Oversight

It is also underpinned by Restorative Practice which seeks to take a restorative approach to resolving conflict and preventing harm.

Scope:

The policy

- addresses bullying behavior, as defined in the *Anti-Bullying Procedures* and includes cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying (such as homophobic bullying and racist bullying)
- addresses the requirement under equality legislation to take such steps as reasonably practicable to prevent harassment and sexual harassment (*Anti Bullying Procedures, 5.5.1*)
- applies to all students, staff or anyone who visits the school including

parents visiting sports teams etc. (*Anti-Bullying Procedures*, 5.5.2)

- applies to all aspects of school life, i.e. School time (including break times), going to and from school, school tours/trips, extra-curricular activities, other times where bullying behavior affects the lives of students in school.

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 behavior:

- A positive school culture and climate which is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
- Encouraging and supporting pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behavior in a non-threatening environment and promoting respectful relationships across the school community .

This is done through:

- 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 behavior (including use of established intervention strategies)
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

Definition of Bullying: In accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* bullying is defined as follows:

Bullying is unwanted negative behavior, verbal, psychological or physical conduct, by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

The following types of bullying behavior 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
- Sexual Harassment
- Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behavior, 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 behavior.

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 behavior.

Negative behavior that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's code of behavior.

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Investigation: The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are:

- Class Teacher (in the first instance)
- Year Head
- Deputy Principal
- Principal

Education and Preventative Strategies: The school community will work proactively to promote an environment where bullying does not take place. Every effort will be made to prevent bullying by raising awareness of all in the school community about the reality of bullying and its detrimental effects.

To help prevent bullying Coláiste Chiaráin will use a number of strategies:

- *The school will seek to promote a positive, open and caring school climate. To enhance this, school assemblies will regularly stress the importance of reporting matters relating to bullying.*
- *There will be information sessions for incoming First Year students in May and September/October each year at which our anti-bullying policy will be outlined and discussed. This will include a focus on Cyber-Bullying.*
- *The GLUAIS student's leadership training programme will incorporate information on bullying and each First Year class will be linked to a member of the team.*
- *The Student Council will provide forums for student discussion and reporting of matters related to bullying.*
- *Our stand up group is a voice for LGBTQ in the school and will promote positive awareness and inclusion with displays throughout the year but particularly during Stand Up week.*
- *Our Culture and Diversity Committee will promote inclusion and understanding particularly during a 'Culture Day'.*
- *Our Amber Flag group promotes positive messages about mental health and support for those with difficulties.*
- *Curricular areas such as SPHE, CSPE, Religion, Health Education and PE will offer opportunities to address issues relating to respect, justice and fair play throughout the academic year.*
- *A 'SMILE Week' will be part of the anti-bullying programme during which time there will be opportunities to invite guest speakers, run poster or literary competitions and display posters to promote healthy and positive interactions and relationships with one another.*
- *All Junior years will engage with FUSE -the anti-bullying programme provided by DCU, the FRIENDS programme and the LOCKERS programme. These will provide the context for the posters and displays on anti-bullying around the school. They will allow students to actively engage with anti-bullying material and will support the skills for building positive and empathetic relationships.*
- *Parents will also receive advice and educational videos from webwise via the schools communication platforms.*

- *The school will display posters to heighten awareness and to encourage students to 'tell' about bullying they may experience or observe. Particular times of the year will be targeted to focus attention on these initiatives.*
- *The school will seek opportunities to enhance the self-worth of all its students by providing a wide range of extra-curricular activities.*
- *Restorative practices/conferencing may be used as one method of dealing with incidents of bullying behavior. Restorative Practice is a proactive tool used to promote fairness and justice in the school community and which encourages a healthy environment.*
- *With regard to the use of IT, filtering software and/or equivalent systems will be used in order to minimize the risk of exposure to inappropriate material. · Students and teachers will be provided with training in the area of Internet safety.*
- *Uploading and downloading of inappropriate software/material is not permitted. · The use of personal memory sticks or other digital storage media in school will require a teacher's permission. Software and activities which circumvent the filtering system is prohibited. Use of such software or such activities will be considered a very serious breach of discipline*

Reporting and investigating incidents of bullying

Rationale for noting and reporting incidents of bullying behavior: Responsible reporting must be seen as the norm within the school. The prevalent misconception among some adults and students - that bullying is a normal phase of development, that it teaches students to toughen up - needs to be challenged. Bullying thrives in an atmosphere of uncertainty and secrecy in which the person who is being bullied feels a sense of hopelessness and futility against the power being exercised by the bully. Effective uncovering of bullying in the school relies on the co-operation of the silent majority of students, on their understanding that they have a responsibility for the safety and welfare of other students; that they have a responsibility to tell.

Students are strongly encouraged to speak with any of their class teachers, their Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal if they are a witness to or a target of bullying behaviour.

Likewise, Parents/guardians should report a suspected incident of bullying to the relevant Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal. Non-teaching staff such as Special Needs Assistants, Caretakers, Secretaries, cleaning staff and supervisors will also be encouraged to report any incident of bullying witnessed by them.

Principles informing the investigation of reported incidents: The aim in investigating alleged incidents of bullying is to bring the bullying to an end and to resolve the issues that gave rise to the bullying in the first place.

The initial focus will be to establish answers to the questions 'what, where, when, who and why'.

Students who feel they are the victim of Cyberbullying are encouraged to keep records of

the event e.g. screenshots of messages.

All reports of bullying behavior will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour and with the school's Mission Statement. In dealing with reports of bullying behavior the school will adopt a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach which will set an example in dealing effectively with conflict in a non-aggressive manner.

Incidents will be investigated as discreetly as possible outside of the classroom situation in a way which avoids as far as possible public humiliation of the student who is being bullied or the student allegedly involved in the bullying behavior.

Procedures for noting and reporting incidents of bullying:

All reports of bullying will be noted and investigated.

- When a teacher receives a report of bullying, a Bullying Report Form will be completed using the templates available on VShare.
- The Bullying Report Form will be passed on to the Year Head who will investigate the report, if necessary in conjunction with the school chaplain, counselor, Deputy Principal or Principal.
- Serious cases of bullying will be referred immediately to the Principal. If there is a Child Protection concern, the Principal as DLP can ascertain whether a report needs to be made.
- In cases where this initial investigation establishes that bullying behavior has occurred, the student(s) involved will be told to stop this behavior immediately pending further investigation where the school's code of behavior will be implemented.
-

Resolving a Complaint: Where appropriate, and particularly in the case of first offenders, the school will adopt an approach that underlines the seriousness of the incident but seeks a resolution on an amicable basis. As we are a Restorative school, the principles of Restorative Practice will underpin all actions.

Any student involved will be asked to write a statement outlining what happened, their actions and reactions and this will be discussed with their Year Head and in some cases, the Deputy Principal.

If the school concludes that a student has engaged in bullying behavior it will be made clear to them that they are in breach of the school's Code of Behaviour and the school will seek to get them to see the situation from the point of view of the student who is being bullied.

Appropriate sanctions will be implemented depending on the case. This will be in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour and may include suspension or expulsion. Where the school is satisfied that any student has persisted in engaging in bullying behavior, serious disciplinary sanctions will be considered.

When the investigation is concluded and if/when sanctions have been completed a restorative meeting will be offered to repair harm and to enable all those involved to move forward.

Open lines of communication will be maintained with parents and guardians at all stages in the process.

Students who are bullied or who are involved in bullying behaviour may need assistance

on an on-going basis. The teaching staff and the Guidance Counsellor may be able to offer some assistance but it may be necessary in some cases for parents to seek outside help. In some cases, particularly where a problem persists, the student may be required to seek professional help.

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.

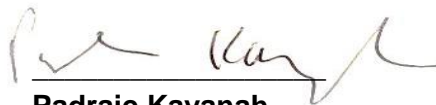
Prevention of Harassment: The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of pupils or staff or the harassment of pupils or staff on any of the nine grounds specified i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

Complaints of Bullying or Harassment among Staff: Where a staff member feels s/he is being bullied or harassed s/he should refer to the Dignity At Work policy 2019 which has been agreed between ACCS, ASTI, TUI and IMPACT. Copies of this are available at the link below, from the office, on the intranet and in the staff handbook. In processing a complaint school management will follow the procedures outlined in the Code.

[Dignity at work policy 2019](#)

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 25th June 2023

Signed:



Padraic Kavanah
Chairperson

Signed:



Mark Neville
Principal