

1. Introduction:

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 Pobailscoil Chorca Dhuibhne 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. Key principles of best practice

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. Definitions of bullying behaviour

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*.

4. Relevant teachers:

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

- The members of the Anti-Bullying Committee
- The Year Heads
- The Deputy Principal
- The Principal

5. Education and Prevention Strategies:

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: See Appendix A for the strategies used in 2013/14

- Awareness raising measures to ensure that all members of the school community have a shared understanding of what constitutes bullying behaviour.
- Strategies are provided to engage pupils in addressing problems when they arise in order to build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils.
- The issue of identity based bullying is explicitly dealt with.
- The Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) programme provides opportunities to explore and discuss areas such as human sexuality and relationships, which has particular relevance to identity-based bullying.
- Participation in extra-curricular programmes is encouraged in order to build self-esteem and to provide pupils with a positive sense of self-worth. There is a broad range of extra-curricular activities made available to all students within the school.
- Cyber-bullying is explicitly dealt with as outlined in Appendix A.
- The needs of pupils with disabilities or with SEN are taken account of by ensuring that they are included in the School Transfer Programme, which is a 10 week course offered to Rang 6 students during the year preceding entry to Pobalscoil Chorca Dhuibhne. In addition, the transition from primary to post-primary is co-ordinated carefully by teachers from Special Needs Department and may include a number of visits to the school during the year prior to entry. This builds self-confidence and familiarity with both the building and other students. There is a particular focus on developing their social skills, self-confidence and self-esteem. Our Special Needs Assistants are of huge assistance in identifying possible incidences of bullying between Special Needs Students amongst themselves when in smaller groups but also, between Special Needs Students and the normal cohort of students. Special Needs students attend mainstream classes within the school as far as is practicable. There is constant monitoring of Special Needs students' progress in all areas of development, including development of coping skills, life skills and communication skills.
- Within the teaching of all subjects an attitude of respect for all is fostered and is expected of each individual teacher that they endeavour; (p28) to promote the value of diversity; to address prejudice and stereotyping and to highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour. For example, in English various literary material is used to discuss issues of relevance to bullying and stereotyping. In Civil, Social and Political Education (CSPE), the interdependence of people in communities at local, national and international levels is stressed. In Geography and History references to colonisation, exploitation and dictatorships are used to

illustrate the negative aspect of power. In subjects such as Art, Drama, Religious Education, and Physical Education co-operation and group enterprise is promoted through team sports, school clubs and societies as well as through practical subjects. Sporting activities in particular provide excellent opportunities for channelling and learning how to control aggression.

- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils is in place both to prevent and deal with bullying behaviour. There is a good supervision system on a rota basis. 'Hot spots' and 'hot times' such as 11.00 am are identified, shared with and monitored by staff on an ongoing basis.

6. Procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and intervention strategies;

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 informed by and follow the Department of Education Guidelines, and are broadly based on Seán Fallon's Anti-Bullying Programme.

Appendix B specifies procedures which are followed for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and intervention strategies and have been formulated following the guidelines below

(pages 31-35 used)

- (i) The primary aim of 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);
- (ii) 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;
- (iii) All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying are 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;
- (iv) Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers, cleaners are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;
- (v) 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;

- (vi) It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset;
- (vii) Teachers take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents;
- (viii) Incidents are generally investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
- (ix) All interviews are 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;
- (x) When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour the relevant teacher seeks answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This is done in a calm manner to show how to deal with conflict effectively and non-aggressively.
- (xi) If a group is involved, each member is interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved are met as a group. At the group meeting, each member will be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements;
- (xii) Each member of a group will be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher;
- (xiii) Those involved may be asked to write down their account of the incident(s);
- (xiv) In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents 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 parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils;
- (xv) 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;
- (xvi) It will also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school;
- (xvii) 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. This can have a therapeutic effect;
- (xviii) In cases where the relevant teacher 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, it will be recorded by the relevant teacher in the recording template at Appendix 3 (see Section 6.8.10 (iii))

- (xix) 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; and
 - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal;
- (xx) 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;
- (xxi) 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.

Procedures for recording bullying behaviour

- (i) While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher will use his/her professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same;
- (ii) If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher will keep appropriate written records which will assist in his/her effort to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- (iii) The relevant teacher will 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.
- (iv) In each of the circumstances at (a) and (b) above, the recording template at **Appendix 3** must be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable. It should also be noted that the timeline for recording bullying behaviour in the recording template at **Appendix 3** does not in any way preclude the relevant teacher from consulting the Principal or Deputy Principal at an earlier stage in relation to a case.

Bullying as part of a continuum of behaviour

It is also important to note that bullying behaviour can be part of a continuum of behaviour rather than a stand-alone issue and in some cases behaviour may escalate beyond that which can be described as bullying to serious physical or sexual assault or harassment. To ensure that any such cases are dealt with appropriately, the school's antibullying policy must provide for appropriate linkages with the overall code of behaviour and provide for referral to be made to relevant external agencies and authorities where appropriate. In cases where a school has serious concerns in relation to managing the behaviour of a pupil, the advice of the National Education Psychological Service (NEPS) should be sought.

Referral of serious cases to the HSE (p35)

- In line with, *Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011* (Children First) and the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* in situations where “the incident is serious and where the behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive, the school must consult the HSE Children and Family Social Services with a view to drawing up an appropriate response, such as a management plan”.
- Serious instances of bullying behaviour should, 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.
- The *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* also provide that where school personnel have concerns about a child but are not sure whether to report the matter to the HSE, the Designated Liaison Person must seek advice from the HSE Children and Family Social Services.

7. Programme of support

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

- Counselling is made available for pupils who have been bullied in order to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed.
- Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may also need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.
- Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour are encouraged to discuss them with teachers.

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.

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.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____ [date].

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.

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 (or where none exists, be otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). 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: _____

Signed: _____ (Principal)

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____

Appendix A

Education and Prevention Strategies

2013/14

Awareness raising measures included:

Staff

Presentation by Dr. Marie Griffin, UCC to all classes in school year 2012/13 re: cyber-bullying.

May 2013 – Presentation by Seán Fallon to whole staff.

August 2013 – Summary of Seán Fallon presentation by Elaine Ní Loinsigh to whole staff followed by formation of committee including teachers and SNA.

Committee meetings to formulate awareness strategies and procedures for dealing with allegations of bullying.

School staff are made familiar with the anti-bullying policy in a number of different ways including:

- (a) Copy of policy is available on school website
- (b) Copy of policy is included in the Teachers' Handbook that is provided to each member of teaching staff on an annual basis
- (c) Copy of policy is included in a abbreviated version of Teachers' Handbook which is provided to temporary teaching staff, substitute teachers and student teachers.
- (d) A concise report from the Anti-bullying committee is included in each staff meeting
- (e) A brief outline of anti-bullying plan for a term, as agreed by the Anti-Bullying committee is forwarded to each member of staff by email. Included are instructions for individual teachers involved in delivery of different aspects of plan, to ensure consistency of information available to students and whole school involvement

Students

- Throughout the year all classes in the school follow SPHE programmes which include the topic of bullying. In addition:
- September - all students addressed regarding new anti-bullying programme to be implemented in school (SPHE classes and Gnó 4)
- Discussion with "Ceannairí" on new programme and feedback requested.
- October – Poem on bullying studied and explored in all English classes throughout the school.
- October – DVD from Seán Fallon's antibullyingcampaign.ie showed to all classes in school during the same class period. The video dealt with the effects of bullying and

in particular, cyber bullying. The video was followed by a questionnaire based on the video.

- Identity based bullying is explicitly addressed through the SPHE/RSE programmes. Also, LGBT posters and information are displayed on notice boards.
- Cyber-bullying has been addressed:
 - (a) Presentation by Dr. Marie Griffin, UCC to all classes in school year 2012/13
 - (b) Pádraig Ó Dubhaigh addressed all computer class for First Years.
 - (c) ECDL – 4th and 5th years – module 7 involved online safety.
 - (d) Garda presentation to 1st and 2nd Years.
 - (e) DVD – Seán Fallon
- Cyclone theatre company gave a performance on bullying, followed by a workshop
- General class surveys regarding bullying were held across all class groups. General feedback was also given to classes on concerns raised by students.
- Special needs students are catered for throughout the SPHE programme. Additionally, there is an emphasis on supporting Special Needs Students socially as well as development of self-esteem and self-confidence.

Parents

- A copy of Anti-Bullying Policy is available on the school website.
- Parents' Council are consulted during drafting/reviewing of policy.
- National Parents' Council arranged an anti-bullying information meeting in the school for all parents of primary and post-primary students in the area.
- Annual information meetings for Years. 1, 3 and 4 are used to remind parents of the Anti-Bullying Policy and that this is an "Anti-Bullying School".

Appendix B

Investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and intervention strategies

1. A bullying concern may be brought to the attention of any of the school's relevant teachers as listed in Section 4. The information may come from a number of different sources:

- (a) Individual student
- (b) Individual member of staff
- (c) Individual parent
- (d) Ceannairí from 6th Year
- (e) Members of the Students' Council
- (f) Anti-Bullying box in the Office
- (g) General bullying class surveys
- (h) Member of the community

2. On receipt of a report of suspected bullying an investigation involving some or all of the following steps may take place :

- (a) A questionnaire on bullying is carried out in the classes of the named alleged bully and victim. It is hoped that further information will come available from these survey.s
- (b) A "Friction Alert" is distributed to all members of staff, to ensure monitoring of those involved.
- (c) Both alleged bully and victim are interviewed regarding incident(s).
- (d) Other students are interviewed.
- (e) A written statement describing the incident is taken from all parties.

3. When an incident of bullying has been established some or all of the following steps may take place:

- (a) Support is offered to both bully and victim, with the school guidance counsellor, chaplain or with outside services.
- (b) The bully is spoken to and gives an undertaking that he/she will not involve themselves in bullying behaviour in the future. If there is a further incident of bullying behaviour by this student then their parents will need to be involved as guarantors of the student's non-involvement in bullying behaviour.
- (c) Parents of the victim are informed of the incident. As per Department of Education and Science Anti-Bullying Guidelines, Section 6(xvi), it will be made clear to each set of pupils and parents that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school.

- (d) A “Bullying Alert” is distributed to all members of staff, to ensure further monitoring of those involved.
- (e) Follow-up may include continued monitoring and further interviews with both parties.
- (f) If the bullying behaviour continues between the parties it will be recorded by the relevant teacher in Appendix 3.