

St. Columbanus N.S.

Antibullying 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 St. Columbanus National 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, 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. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows:

All reports of bullying, no matter how trivial shall be noted, investigated and dealt with by class teachers. In that way, pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance.

All reports of bullying/alleged bullying behaviour by pupils shall be referred immediately to the Principal or the Deputy Principal.

The Class teacher, Principal or Deputy-Principal shall inform parents and guardians of victims and bullies.

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: -

Class teacher addresses the issue of bullying either informally or through Social Personal and Health Education Programme (SPHE).

Monitoring the behaviour of both the victim and bully to prevent further incidents of bullying.

An IBP (Individual Behaviour Plan) may be put in place for persistent offenders. They may also be referred to outside agencies e.g. NEPS, Health Board, Gardai (See Department of Education Child Protection Guidelines and procedures p20)

Making Parents/Guardians aware of counselling facilities available.

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 :

Since the failure to report bullying can lead to a continuation or a deterioration of bullying, the school and parents encourage children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.

This can be with the class teacher, the teacher on yard duty at the time, Special Needs Assistants, and the principal or with parents.

This is a "telling school" as defined in the Stay Safe Programme.

Children will therefore be constantly assured that their reports of bullying either for themselves or peers will be treated with sensitivity.

An allegation of bullying behaviour will be noted and recorded by the class teacher or the teacher on duty/yard duty.

The allegation will be investigated – what, who, when, where, why?

An effort will be made to resolve any issues and to restore as far as practicable, the relationships.

The teacher will exercise professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and as to how it can be resolved.

Parents and pupils are required to cooperate with any investigation.

Serious incidents, or a pattern of bullying behaviour which has in the opinion of a teacher not been adequately or appropriately addressed within 20 school days will be recorded on the DES

Template.

All allegations of bullying shall be reported to the principal / deputy principal. The DES recording template will be used where he/she considers the bullying behaviour to constitute serious misconduct.

The principal / deputy principal will then speak with the class and conduct a questionnaire using the ABC (Anti Bullying Campaign) resources. This is used as a part of the investigation process.

If a group is involved, they will be met both individually and as a group. Each member will be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone is clear about what everyone else has said.

Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way, and will be expected to assist the investigation.

Children should understand there are no innocent bystanders where bullying is concerned.

The alleged “bully” will be asked to reflect on his/her behaviour and its consequences for himself/herself and for the person who is the victim.

Parents will be made aware of this behaviour and requested to come and discuss it with the teacher/principal with a view to solving the problem. If necessary the aggressor will be asked to sign an undertaking that “this behaviour will not reoccur.”

The situation will continue to be monitored to ensure that the problem has been resolved. Actions taken will be recorded in a template for recording anti- bullying behaviour. Records will be reviewed and analysed.

The code of behaviour will be invoked in circumstances where it is deemed prudent by the relevant teacher and school principal.

If a case remains unresolved the matter will be referred to the school’s Board of Management. The Board will also be briefed in relation to the number, if any, of templates which have been completed.

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.

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.

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*) :

The school's Programme of Support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:

Regular reference to the Anti Bullying Policy during class lessons and assemblies.

Circle time.

Friends for Life programme

Fuse Programme

Virtues Programme

Restorative Practice

Our support teachers will facilitate self-esteem building between a teacher and the pupil if needed. Work with small groups will also be facilitated.

Through the means of curricular and extracurricular activities to develop positive self worth.

Developing pupil's awareness of identity-based bullying and in particular trans-phobic bullying, i.e. the "Growing Up" lesson in SPHE. Particular account will also be taken of the important role pupils with Special Educational Needs have to play.

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.

10. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 20/11/23.

11. 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.

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 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: ___20/11/23_____

Signed: _____
(Principal)

Date: ___20/11/23