

# Scoil Cholmáin, Corkbeg, Whitegate, Co. Cork

Roll Number – 119921

Tel: (021) 4661622

Email: [office@whitegatens.ie](mailto:office@whitegatens.ie)

Website: [www.whitegatens.ie](http://www.whitegatens.ie)

## **Anti-bullying Policy - Students**

### **Introduction**

In accordance with the requirements of the Education Welfare Act 2000 and the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary Schools 2013, the Board of Management of Scoil Cholmáin, Whitegate N.S has adopted the following Anti-Bullying Policy within the framework of the school's overall Code of Behaviour.

### **Links to the School's Mission Statement**

As a Catholic school and in keeping with our Catholic Ethos we respect and are inclusive of all. We work to maintain as harmonious, safe and caring an atmosphere as possible and where needed, will employ processes to clarify and rectify any unpleasant situations.

### **Rationale**

This policy is to assist the school in devising measures to prevent bullying behaviour, to identify bullying behaviour when it happens and deal with the behaviour.

The Board of Management of Scoil Cholmáin 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 principals of best practice in preventing and addressing bullying behaviour.

- Creating a positive school climate which welcomes diversity and is based on the principles of inclusivity; encouraging pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment and promoting respectful relationships across the school community.
- Effective leadership and a school-wide approach to bullying, to raise awareness amongst the entire school community that bullying is unacceptable behaviour.
- A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact.
- Implementation of educational programmes that raise awareness, build empathy, resilience and respect in pupils.
- Address the issues of cyber-bullying, identity-based bullying and homophobic or transgender bullying.
- Provide effective supervision and monitoring of pupils.
- Ongoing monitoring, investigation, recording of and intervention in incidents of bullying.
- Facilitate the ongoing evaluation of the anti-bullying policy.

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## **Definition of bullying**

In accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for 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’

Bullying can occur at any age, in any environment, and can be long or short-term.

## **Examples of bullying**

- Deliberate exclusion
- Malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
- Cyber bullying,
- Identity based bullying (including family status, religion, homophobic bullying, gender (including transgender), and membership of the Traveller Community).
- Racist bullying
- Bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs
- Isolated or once-off incidents do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school’s code of behaviour.

## **Impact of bullying**

Bullying can impact a person in the a variety of ways including loss of self-esteem, anxiety, stress, depression, difficulties with school work, reluctance to attend school, and, in extreme cases, self-harm and suicide.

## **Aims of policy**

- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents/guardians.
- To create a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To develop procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour

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## **Guidelines (Content of Policy)**

- Our Anti Bullying Policy is guided by an ethos of care, respect and love.
- Awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour is raised regularly through the Curriculum, classroom work, the use of co-operative games and maintenance of a culture of group work and tolerance within the classroom.
- Comprehensive supervision and monitoring measures through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation.
- Procedures for investigating and dealing with an incident of bullying behaviour include listening to and noting the allegation, investigation and outcome, referral to Principal and moving forward.
- Support for the victim will include recognition of the incidents, a collaborative effort by the school to develop the child's self-esteem, the receipt of an apology from the perpetrator and efforts made to eliminate the day to day opportunities to allow the situation to redevelop.
- Support for the perpetrator of bullying behaviour includes opportunities to 'move on' if the class teacher and Principal are satisfied of the sincerity of the regret. The matter will be discussed with the parents/carers of the child and the situation will be monitored until the class teacher and Principal are satisfied of no further need.
- All efforts will be made to deal with all parties sensitively ensuring that the behaviours do not be perceived as the main characteristics of either child.
- Anti-bullying will be supported through curricular work in the areas of SPHE/ Religion/ Drama/ Art/ Literacy and the use of cooperative strategies in class.
- NEPS (National Educational Psychological Service) Emotional, Behavioural and Social Guidelines will be employed if deemed necessary by the class teacher and Principal
- The promotion of home/school/community links to counter bullying behaviour.
- Incidents of bullying or friendship issues will be monitored, as will the records, so as to identify patterns, including situations that may be inadvertently created by supervision or class seating arrangements.

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## **The School's procedures for investigation, follow up and recording of bullying behaviour.**

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

- The Class Teacher/Relevant Teacher initially
- The Principal thereafter if necessary.

The primary aim in dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as it is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame). With this in mind the school's steps/procedures are as follows:

### **Investigating bullying behaviour**

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the class teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred, what type if it has and how best it can be resolved
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'
- Non-teaching staff must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying to the relevant teacher.
- Teachers should take a problem- solving approach when dealing with alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.
- Initial investigations of bullying may be done in class where possible but some incidents might be best investigated outside the classroom situation.
- All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant class teacher should seek answers to questions of what, where, who and why.
- If a group is involved each member should be interviewed individually at first, then met as a group.

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## **Steps to follow when bullying behaviour has been established**

Where it has been established that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and the actions been taken.

It must also be made clear to each set of pupils and parents/guardians that where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined his/her parents and the school.

Additional follow up meetings with parents/guardians of children involved may be arranged after an appropriate time to ensure the matter has been resolved satisfactorily.

In determining whether bullying has been adequately and appropriately dealt with the teacher must take the following factors into account:

- Whether bullying behaviour between the parties has been resolved.
- Whether relationships between the parties have been restored as far as possible.

In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after she /he has established bullying has occurred, it must be recorded in the template set out in Appendix 3 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures 2013.

Incidents of Bullying which is recorded by the relevant teacher must be reported to the Principal or Deputy Principal.

Serious cases of bullying or those of an abusive nature may need to be reported to Tusla or/and the Gardaí.

Where the parent/guardian is not satisfied that the school has not dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents/guardians must be referred, as appropriate to the School's Complaints Procedures. (These are included in this policy document)

In the event that a parent has exhausted the School's Complaints Procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents/guardians of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

## **Recording**

Noting and reporting of bullying behaviour is to be documented using the template for recording bullying behaviour (Appendix 3, Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary Schools 2013). All records must be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation.

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

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relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.

When it has been established that bullying behaviour has occurred, the relevant teacher must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore as far as possible the relationships of the parties involved.

## **Programme of support**

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying involves a whole school approach. Given the complexity of bullying behaviour no one intervention/support programme works in all situations. It may be necessary to suggest that parents seek referrals to outside agencies in order to receive further support for pupils and their families if needed.

## **Supervision and monitoring of pupils**

The Board of Management of Scoil Cholmáin, Whitegate N.S. 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

## **Success criteria**

We consider an effective framework to deal with bullying, an effective educational emphasis on this area and responsible action by staff and students to be a successful outcome of this policy.

## **Roles and responsibility**

- All adults have a responsibility to supervise and monitor all situations
- The class teacher has to be aware of all his/her students and any behavioural changes
- Parents/carers are encouraged to come with queries in the first instance and be proactive
- The Principal will address/be informed of all situations
- The BOM will monitor the progress of this policy

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## **Complaints procedure for parents**

### **Stage 1**

A parent/guardian who wishes to make a complaint should, approach the class teacher with a view to resolving the matter. Where the parent/guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the class teacher she/he should approach the principal with a view to resolving it. If the complaint is still unresolved the parent/guardian should raise the matter with the Chairperson of the Board of Management with a view to resolving it.

### **Stage 2**

If the complaint is still unresolved and the parent/guardian wishes to pursue the matter further he/she should lodge a complaint in writing with the Chairperson of the Board of management. The Chairperson should bring the precise nature of the written complaint to the notice of the teacher and seek to resolve the matter between the parties within five days of the receipt of the written complaint.

### **Stage 3**

If the complaint is not resolved informally, the Chairperson should, subject to the general authorisation of the Board of Management, supply the relevant teacher with a copy of the written complaint, arrange a meeting with the teacher and where applicable, the Principal Teacher with a view to resolving the complaint. Such a meeting should take place within 10 days of receipt of the written complaint.

### **Stage 4**

If the complaint is still not resolved the Chairperson should make a formal report to the Board of Management within 10 days of the meeting (referred to in stage 3). If the Board considers that the complaint is not substantiated the teacher and the complainant should be informed within 3 days of the Board Meeting. If the Board considers the complaint is substantiated or that it warrants further investigation it proceeds as follows:

- The teacher should be informed that the investigation is proceeding to the next stage
- The teacher should be supplied with a copy of any written evidence in support of the complaint.
- The teacher should be requested to supply written statement to the Board in response to the complaint
- The teacher should be afforded an opportunity to make a presentation of case to the Board and may be accompanied by a friend at such a meeting.
- The meeting of the Board of Management referred to above (Stage 4 point 4) will take place 10 days of the meeting referred to in stage 3.

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## **Stage 5**

When the Board has completed its investigation, the Chairperson should convey the decision of the Board in writing to the teacher and complainant within 5 days of the meeting of the Board of Management referred to in stage 4.



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## **Ratification**

This policy has been ratified by the Board of Management.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: \_\_\_\_\_