

ANTI-BULLYING 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. Conal's N.S. 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:

- 1) A positive school culture and climate which is:
 - a) welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
 - b) Encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment;
 - c) and promotes respectful relationships across the school community;
- 2) Effective leadership;
- 3) A school-wide approach;
- 4) A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
- 5) Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that:
 - a) build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils;
 - b) and explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- 6) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
- 7) Supports for staff;
- 8) Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
- 9) 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:

- a) deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying, including so-called 'private conversations'
- b) cyber-bullying and
- c) 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, 'liking' or sharing 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: (**see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools***):

- a. All class teachers
- b. Teachers may also be relevant if they witness bullying behaviour (e.g. yard teacher) and may be able to help the class teacher

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 (**see Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools***):

- a) Stay Safe Programme taught every year in April/May;
- b) RESPECT programme for those pupils with special needs or for promoting inclusion and respecting differences
- c) SELF-ESTEEM programme will be used by the resource teacher where required
- d) Relationships and Sexuality Programme in the senior class produced by the former Southern Health Board
- e) Walk Tall SPHE programme
- f) Out and About SPHE programme
- g) Alive-O Religious programme

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 (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*) :

- a) Both bully and victim will be interviewed separately by the class teacher in the presence of another member of staff. Both will be asked in a calm manner to answer questions of What? Where? When? Who? Why? Where possible, the child will be asked to write an account of the incidents. Teacher will record the responses. The guilty party will be given a warning. If there is a previous incident involving a pupil, this will be taken into consideration.

- b) Should a repetition of the related misbehaviour occur, both bully and victim will be referred to the Principal or in his absence, the Deputy Principal. Having again interviewed both children and responses recorded, the bully will be given a warning, an appropriate sanction and will be informed that parents/guardians will be summoned to the school should there be a further repetition of the bullying behaviour.
- c) If the bullying behaviour is repeated a third time, an appointment will be arranged with parents/guardians of the bully so they can come to the school. The child's file to date will be read to them, thereby alerting them to the fact that their child is bullying. Parents/guardians will be made fully aware of the next disciplinary steps in the Anti-bullying Code i.e. referral to Board of Management. A further more severe sanction will be imposed at this stage.
- d) If the bullying continues, parents/guardians will be recalled to the school. They will be informed that should there be a further repetition of the bullying behaviour, it will be necessary to inform the Board of Management. At this stage the person/persons involved will be excluded from representing the school on outings of any kind e.g. sports, school tours, nature walks, participation in quizzes, library visits etc. Extra yard supervision of said child/children will be provided by staff until the issues have been resolved.
- e) If the problem still remains unresolved at school level, the matter will be referred to the Board of Management.
- f) Suspension will be used as part of our code of discipline. The Board of Management hereby grant permission to the principal the power to suspend a student. If suspension is to be used the following applies; A student will not be suspended for more than three days, except in exceptional circumstances where the Principal considers that a period of suspension longer than three days is needed in order to achieve a particular objective. If a suspension longer than three days is being proposed by the Principal, the matter will be referred to the Board of Management for consideration and approval, giving the circumstances and the expected outcomes. However, the Board of Management authorises the Principal, with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board, to impose a suspension of up to five days in circumstances where a meeting of the Board cannot be convened in a timely fashion, subject to the guidance concerning such suspensions.

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*):

- a) Stay Safe revision
- b) Walk Tall
- c) Out and About
- d) Alive-O revision
- e) Utilising the services of the NEPS psychologist where deemed necessary
- f) SELF-ESTEEM programme
- g) Socially Speaking programme
- h) Time to Talk for junior pupils
- i) Talkabout for all ages
- j) Well-being DEIS plan

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 January 2015 and is reviewed annually.

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel and to the parent body. 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. 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)

Signed: _____

(Principal)

Date: _____

Date: _____