Coláiste Pobail Fóla - 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 Coláiste Pobail Fóla 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-

        o is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;

        o encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and

        o 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-

        o build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and

        o 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. **Scope**

This policy refers to the rights to freedom and safety for all. This policy covers all staff members, students and parents when they are in contact with the school. It is the responsibility of everyone who is contact with the school to show respect for the rights of others. The Care Team of the school acknowledges that the main aim of the school in the context of this policy is to provide education to students in an environment that is safe, free and comfortable. The school has legislative responsibilities regarding employees and there is an Officer that deals with harassment / sexual harassment and bullying involving staff members.

This policy comes into effect any time a student is on the school campus or under the supervision of the school. Also covered by this policy are school trips and extra-curricular activities outside the school that are under the supervision of a member of staff. The school has a duty of care in respect of students and employees and inappropriate digital behaviour such as cyberbullying that impacts the comfort and safety of a staff member will not be tolerated.

5. Relationship with the School Mission Statement

In Coláiste Pobail Fóla, we respect each other. We believe that the advancement of the school and the academic progress of our students depends on this respect above all else. This respect forms the foundation of the relationship between students, staff, parents and school management. Bullying damages these relationships. Therefore, the school is committed to create a safe environment where bullying is not accepted or permitted.

- This policy adds to the school's mission and vision. It gives structure and details to the staff to handle this issue whenever it occurs. This anti-bullying policy will build on the ethos that exists in the school to solve any bullying issues that arise.

- In practical terms, this policy will ensure a learning environment that is safe and secure. It imbues respect for values, beliefs, traditions, and the different ways of life in society as a whole.

- It encourages the practices of respect, curtesy, and pulls from the interdependence of people in groups, communities or at school.

- This policy looks to give particular care to students at risk so that they can be monitored and early interventions can be made if needed, as well as sensitively handling the needs, anxieties and worries.

6. Teachers who will investigate and deal with bullying as it arises. (see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Guidelines)

Teachers

Mentors

Deputy Principal

Principal

Support and Care Role:

Mentors

Guidance Councillor

SEN Co-ordinator

Whole-School Approach:

All members of the school community are requested to report incidents that may be regarded as inappropriate behaviour; particularly in the case where an act has caused distress to another individual or group. When allegations of bullying are made, the school conducts a thorough yet open-minded investigation, and seeks to inform all parties involved of the negative effects of such behaviour.

The overall approach is resolution focused rather than one that insists on appropriating blame, using a Restorative Practice approach.

Parents are involved if the problem persists and the discipline procedure comes into play if all other steps have failed.

The school is supported by our internal guidance and counselling service in dealing with cases of bullying and also has access to external support agencies such as the Psychological Support Service of County Dublin ETB and Teen Focus of the ISPCC.
School Context:

- Coláiste Pobail Fóla is a relatively small school community where both the educational and pastoral development of the pupil is more easily identifiable.

- The school prioritises pastoral care with every class having a specific Mentor assigned to them.

- Each class group has a minimum of one Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) /Guidance period per week and this provides a forum to discuss issues related to self-esteem and bullying. There is a focus on personal development in these courses which include modules on assertive communication and mutual respect.

- The theme of bullying is also addressed in the Religious Education syllabus.

- The school also runs a 'Friendship Week' early each year to raise awareness of interpersonal relationships and of getting on well together within the school community.

- An annual 'Life Care Awareness Week' is also organised to encourage self-care and to emphasise the importance of sharing our problems with trusted others.

Suggested Actions for the prevention of bullying

- It is the aim of the anti-bullying policy to reduce incidences of bullying by sharing information regarding the nature and effects of bullying. To prevent the problem is it envisaged that;

- That an acceptable behaviour charter will be created by each class and this will be shared by the students.

- That there will be a friendship week in the first term of each school year.

- An anti-cyberbullying campaign where information is shared with students to include how to take a screenshot and how to digitally record. This will be supported with talks from the Community Garda as Covid restrictions allow.

- Students are shown how to report bullying and to email staff if they do not want to approach a staff member in front of other students.

- That there is a clear procedure to report incidents of bullying.

7.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.

We take every opportunity to reduce bullying by being knowledgeable of bullying behaviour and being able to recognise it. We encourage students to to accept such behaviour and that there can be places in the school where bullying is more likely to occur. Such places a re given extra monitoring as outlined below:

Break and Lunchtime: 1 teachers per classroom

Yard: 3-4 Teachers

Acceptable Usage Policy   (for the use of digital resources in the school)

What Students Can Do:

Bullying can often be subtle and difficult for teachers to notice. As a result of this we encourage students to take be responsible by implementing the following suggestions.

- To make themselves knowledgable regarding the schools policies and procedures regarding bullying .
- To report any incidence of bullying that they see even if it doesn't concern them directly by:

(i) Sending an email to a member of staff.(ii)telling a teacher   (iii) telling a parent / guardian

  • Avoiding revenge

- Avoid getting involved in a group that is involved in bullying behaviour.
- Promote respect and understanding of all students.
- Utilise the Students Council to promote the issue.

Parents / Guardians:

- To inform themselves knowledgable regarding the schools policies and procedures regarding bullying .
- To emphasise the inappropriateness of bullying at home.
- To support the school's anti-bullying policy
- To cultivate effective communication between the parents / guardians and the school, ie. parent-teacher meeting, information evenings, Parent's Council, returning of school forms, checking of school diary checking of school website etc.

School Procedures

Steps to report, note and record incidences:

The procedures for reporting, noting and recording incidences(alleged or suspected) are outlined below. There are six steps that cover procedures for noting, reporting and proceeding in the cases of bullying that are suspected, alleged or corroborated. To make sure that the bullying is brought to the attention of the most suitable authority, there are two possible cases outlined below. Case A deals with the most common form of bullying, usually messing or banter is the most visible component. If a teacher sees this type of behaviour but suspects that there is more involved **a teacher must send an email to the Principal or Deputy Principal with the title 'Inappropriate Behaviour'** Step 2 and Step 3 follow if there is more than one report or if the subject of the behaviour reports other incidents. Case A and Case B come together at Step 3 where a student, parents or teacher make an allegation or an improvement is not seen after steps 1 and 2.

Case A:

If a teacher sees behaviour or inappropriate writing that causes them to be concerned:

Step 1
- **An email with the title 'Inappropriate Behaviour' is written** after the teacher speaks to the students after the incident.
- The report is sent to the Mentor and Principal to alert them to the incident so that they can speak to the students and parents/guardians concerned.

Step 2

- If the behaviour continues the student is advised and/or sanctioned ie detention, Internal Suspension
- The student who is the subject of the behaviour is asked to record all the behaviour (details, date) of all incidents that effect them/
- The teacher must share all information with the Principal.

Step 3:

If the Inappropriate Behaviour does not cease or it is understood to be bullying behaviour, the procedure below is followed:

- **The student who made the initial complaint is spoken to.** They are listened to carefully and empathetically about what happened and how they would like the situation to be rectified.
- If it is appropriate **the other student(s)** are spoken to **separately**. It is very important to be careful with the use of the term 'bullying"at this point.
- The school Guidance Councillor can offer council and support to the students at this point.
- If it is deemed appropriate, the students concerned are spoken to together (without assigning blame) in a group to make every effort to rectify the situation and to end the inappropriate behaviour.

If the bullying behaviour continues the schools discipline policy is enforced:

Notes, letters and conversations with parents

Detention

Internal Suspension

Suspension

Step 4

The case is taken to the Board of Management where the students and parents/ guardians participate in the meeting.

Step *5*

Permanent Exclusion

Case B

(i) If a student or parent/guardian make a direct complaint to the school authorities in respect of inappropriate behaviour the process starts at Step 3 as outlined above, the case is investigated without assigning blame at the beginning so the facts can be ascertained and the situation rectified

(ii)In cases where complaints are made regarding cyberbullying (ie: texts, emails, snapchat, discord etc.) it is suggested that the students/parent/guardian use 'Prnt Scrn/ Screen shot' to capture a record of the behaviour. Teachers are asked not to look at private emails or social media pages at any time. If necessary the student may be asked to transcribe the text message or print the page with the inappropriate language. In cases of serious cyberbullying the process starts at Step 3 above.

> *** It is important that the student understands that the investigation of an allegation is not the same as an accusation against then and that the whole story will be listened to before action is taken.**

Appendix

Types of bullying

The following are some of the types of bullying behaviour that can occur amongst pupils:

o Physical aggression: This behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While pupils often engage in 'mess fights', they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.

o Intimidation: Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation: it may be based on the use of very aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon. Particularly upsetting can be a facial expression which conveys aggression and/or dislike.

o Isolation/exclusion and other relational bullying: This occurs where a certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or all of the class group. This practice is usually initiated by the person engaged in bullying behaviour and can be difficult to detect. It may be accompanied by writing insulting remarks about the pupil in public places, by passing around notes about or drawings of the pupil or by whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard. Relational bullying occurs when a person's attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. One of the most common forms includes control: "Do this or I won't be your friend anymore"(implied or stated); a group ganging up against one

person (girl or boy); non-verbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumours about

a person or giving them the "silent treatment".

o Cyber-bullying: This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, e-mail, instant messaging (IM), apps, gaming sites, chat-rooms and other online technologies. Being the target of inappropriate or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying. As cyber-bullying uses technology to perpetrate bullying behaviour and does not require face to face contact, cyber-bullying can occur at any time (day or night). Many forms

of bullying can be facilitated through cyber-bullying. For example, a target may be sent homophobic text messages or pictures may be posted with negative comments about a person's sexuality, appearance etc.

o Name calling: Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) which hurts, insults or humiliates should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name- calling of this type refers to physical appearance, e.g., size or clothes worn. Accent or distinctive voice characteristics may attract negative attention. Academic ability can also provoke name calling. This tends to operate at two extremes. There are those who are singled out for attention because they are perceived to be weak academically. At the other extreme there are those who, because they are perceived as high achievers, are also targeted.

o Damage to property: Personal property can be the focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, school books and other learning material or interference with a pupil's locker or bicycle. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.

o Extortion: Demands for money may be made, often accompanied by threats (sometimes carried out in the event of the targeted pupil not delivering on the demand). A pupil may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to another who is engaged in bullying behaviour.