



**COOLMINE
COMMUNITY
SCHOOL**

**SCOIL
PHOBAIL
CHÚIL MHÍN**

**ANTI-
BULLYING
POLICY**

**POLASAÍ
IN AGHAIDH
BULAÍOCHTA**

**CLONSILLA, DUBLIN 15.
CLUAIN SAILEACH, BAC 15.**

OUR MISSION STATEMENT

WE STRIVE TO CREATE AN
ATMOSPHERE OF MUTUAL
RESPECT WHICH PROMOTES
EXCELLENCE IN ALL
ASPECTS OF SCHOOL LIFE
AND ALLOWS INDIVIDUALS
TO REALISE THEIR FULL
POTENTIAL.

Coolmine Community School – Anti-bullying policy

INTRODUCTION / RÉAMHRÁ

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 Coolmine Community School has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour.
2. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* which were published in September 2013.

This policy is supported by the pre-existing and more comprehensive Anti-Bullying Policy which was ratified in February 2012 and reviewed during the period January – April 2014. (Appendix 1)

3. 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
- 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)
- Builds 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

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- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
 - Support 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.
4. 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
- Identity-based bullying such as homophobic and transphobic 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 forums 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, Department of Education and Skills 2013*.

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5. The relevant teacher(s) for reporting, investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows: (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

Reporting: All Staff

Investigating and dealing: Ceann Ti Chaplain
Counsellor
Deputy-Principals
Principal

6. 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*):

Prevention of bullying is a major focus in the school and with that in mind the following aspects underpin a proactive approach.

- The School Journal has a section on Bullying Behaviour
- All First Year students are given a set of guidelines on dealing with bullying behaviour. This happens in September. (Appendix 2)
- Guidelines for Parents on Countering Bullying Behaviour are made available at the information meeting for parents of incoming first years. (Appendix 3)
- Internet Acceptable Use Policy
- The Meitheal Programme.

The purpose of the Meitheal programme is to provide support for First Year Students especially the most vulnerable. Students going into Fifth Year are invited to apply in writing for the programme. They are then interviewed and those who are selected attend a full day's training with the counsellor. The Meitheal are formally introduced to the new First Years on the induction day. The Meitheal meet with the counsellor once a week to discuss matters of concern.

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- There is an Anti-Bullying Charter prominently displayed in every classroom. This is based on the notion of rights and responsibilities.
 - The SPHE programme continues to deal with bullying each year. There is a module on bullying behaviour in the programme.
 - The Principal and the Ceann Ti periodically address students in the different year groups at Assembly on the issue of bullying
 - In a previous review a survey was administered to 243 students. The findings and suggestions made by students informed the review of the policy in 2011 / 12. One of the main findings of the survey was that most people who are bullied would not report it for fear of reprisal. The review of the policy focused on creating an atmosphere where students feel encouraged to report bullying in relation to themselves and/or others.
7. 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*)

DEALING WITH COMPLAINTS, DISCLOSURES, SUSPICIONS OF BULLYING (STUDENT/S TO STUDENT/S) / AG DÉILEÁIL LE GEARÁIN NOCHTADH AGUS AMHRAIS FAOI BHULAÍOCHT (DALTA/Í LE DALTA/Í)

Complaints / Disclosure of Bullying

Bullying behaviour may come to the attention of a staff member in a variety of ways. While there may be different levels of gravity, all incidents should be recorded. **All reports of bullying incidents will be investigated.**

Just Telling

Subjects of bullying behaviour may gain confidence by “telling” and just talking about what has happened to them. Building confidence may be a vital factor in making progress.

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A student may simply wish to:

- Discuss what has happened/is happening to him or her.
- Seek advice
- Express how he/she feels in relation to perceived incidents of bullying

Handling a Disclosure with Sensitivity

In handling a disclosure of bullying behaviour, a staff member will endeavour to:

- Listen sympathetically
- Reassure the student that bullying does not mean that there is something wrong with him/her
- Emphasise that the problem lies with the perpetrator, not with him/her
- Encourage him/her to talk about how he /she feels
- Reassure him/her that he /she has a right to be free of intimidation and harassment.
- Make clear to the student that he/she is not telling tales but behaving responsibly.
- Advise students that physical retaliation is not an appropriate response. Violence is never acceptable

REPORTING BULLYING / BULAÍOCHT A THUAIRISCIÚ

A staff member who suspects that a student may be a subject of bullying behaviour or who receives a complaint / disclosure that a student is the subject of bullying behaviour should report the matter to the relevant person as soon as possible (Ceann Ti/ Counsellor/ Chaplain/ Deputy Principal / Principal). Where the Ceann Ti is dealing with the matter he/she fills in the Bullying Incident Report Form (Appendix 4) and in assessing the situation he/she will decide on a course of action. The counsellor will keep his/her own records.

Working on a solution to a Bullying Problem

Two possible approaches are outlined below

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▪ **No Blame Approach**

There are seven steps in the ‘No Blame’ approach. The student who is being bullied is interviewed about who was involved in the bullying and how he/she feels when bullied. Their feelings can be expressed in writing or drawing. The next five steps require the investigator to meet with the people involved in the bullying (including bystanders/colluders) explaining the problem, sharing responsibility and asking the group for ideas.

The optimum size for this group is six to eight and it does not include the person being bullied. Responsibility for solving the problem is left with the group. After about a week the investigator meets each student individually, including the student being bullied, to discuss how things have been going. The main strength of this approach is that it makes it less likely that the perpetrator of bullying will seek retribution from the person being bullied for ‘telling’.

▪ **Shared Concern Approach**

This approach is used where a group is involved in bullying. The Investigator has individual meetings with the students suspected of bullying. After this the student who is being bullied is spoken to. All parents/guardians are notified. About a week later the talks are repeated. Once again this may be on an individual basis. However, they could be spoken to as a group, with or without the student being bullied depending on the circumstances. The success of this approach depends on the group’s level of empathy towards the suffering of the student being bullied.

▪ **Cases which cannot be solved by the No-Blame / Shared Concern Approach**

Staff members are best advised to take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents/guardians. Such incidents are best investigated outside the classroom situation to avoid the public humiliation of the victim or the pupil engaged in bullying behaviour.

Students will be interviewed in an attempt to get all sides of the story. All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all students concerned. Students who are not directly involved may also provide very useful information as they may have witnessed incidents or overheard things being said.

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When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour attempts will be made to seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.

If a group is involved, each member will be asked for his/her account of what happened. A group meeting may be convened.

If it is concluded that a student has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the Code of Behaviour and/or the Anti-Bullying Policy and try to get him/her to see the situation from the subject's point of view.

After the interview by the teacher each member of the group should be helped to handle the possible pressures that often face them.

Teachers who are investigating cases of bullying behaviour should keep a written record of their discussions with those involved. It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident.

In cases where it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, a member of staff may meet with the parents or guardians of the two parties involved as appropriate. The teacher will explain the actions being taken and the reasons for them, referring them to the school policy. Ways in which the parents/guardians can reinforce or support the actions taken by the school will be discussed.

The teacher may arrange follow-up meetings with the two parties involved separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the subject of bullying is ready and agreeable. This can have a therapeutic effect.

A student who has been the target of bullying will be encouraged to report any further instances of bullying immediately.

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After a short period of time a review of the school's action will include a discussion with the complaining student and/or his/her parents, with a view to ascertaining that the matter has been satisfactorily settled or whether further action is required.

▪ **Sanctions**

Sanctions will be applied according to the Code of Behaviour of the school. In a situation where it has been determined that bullying has occurred the following sanctions may apply:

- The offending student/students are informed that the incidents are being recorded. An official warning not to reoffend will be given.
- The parents of the offending students will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and to explain the actions being taken. This would become particularly important where the offender does not understand the gravity of the offence or where on-going support from parents or professional help may be required by him/her.
- In severe cases or where the offender continues to re-offend the Board of Management will become involved and the offending student may be suspended for an appropriate amount of time.
- In extreme cases the student may be expelled.

Behaviour Programme for Working with Pupils Involved in Bullying

Students involved in bullying behaviour need assistance on an ongoing basis.

Support for the Subject of Bullying Behaviour

The subject of bullying may need counselling and opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem and to develop their friendship and social skills if this is needed. The student may avail of support from the counsellor/chaplain or another staff member whom the student trusts.

▪ **Help for the Perpetrator**

Students who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them learn ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.

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Interventions should be offered to the student involved in bullying behaviour to enable him/her to make the necessary attitudinal and behavioural changes. It would be useful to find out why the student is involved in bullying behaviour. However the first step is to get the offender to realise that his/her behaviour is unacceptable and is causing distress. The student may avail of support from the counsellor/chaplain or another staff member whom the student trusts.

8. 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*)

DEALING WITH BULLYING (GUIDELINES FOR STUDENTS) AG DÉILEÁIL LE BULAÍOCHTA

Bullying is defined as unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against another person or persons and which is repeated over time. This includes cyber bullying and identity based bullying.

Examples

Physical aggression; damage or misplacement of another's work or property; extortion, intimidation, abusive phone calls or text messages; deliberate exclusion or isolation; slagging; name calling; unwelcome comments; hitting; throwing items at another person; spreading rumours threatening, ridiculing or embarrassing another person by using the internet, mobile phones or other technologies.

The excuse that any of these behaviours is "only messing" is not acceptable.

It is important to remember:

- You cannot see inside somebody else's head.
- Each person has a right to be whom and what they are.
- All students are entitled to an education free from fear and intimidation.
- Respect should be shown to all persons at all times.

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- Bullies look for an excuse for what they do. They try to justify their actions by saying it is a person's fault for being different. If there is no real difference then they will invent one.

What should you do if you are being bullied?

Don't keep it to yourself. Talk to someone you can trust, a friend, brother or sister, your parents, a teacher, a member of the non-teaching staff. They are all there to help. Don't forget that your Caomhnair and the Meitheal may be able to help you in a special way.

Remember

- It's the bully who is in the wrong not you! There is nothing wrong in asking for help.
- Try to be assertive. Don't let them see that you are upset. Keep your head and shoulders up. Don't look down. Don't retaliate physically.
- Tell the truth about what has happened. Don't exaggerate. Don't believe the lies that the bullies tell about you. Don't hide what is happening from the adults you trust.
- If you know somebody is being bullied talk to a trusted adult about it. This is not "ratting" - it is behaving responsibly. The silence and support of bystanders allows this behaviour to continue and may even encourage the bully.

Work at developing your friendships. Don't allow yourself to become isolated. Get involved in activities in the school.

Finally

In our school, everybody is valued. We are all different- that's what makes us special. The people in this school have the right to be themselves and the responsibility to treat others, as they would like to be treated. Silence allows people to suffer.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PARENTS/GUARDIANS / MOLTAÍ DO THUISMITHEOIRÍ / CAOMHNÓIRÍ

Our school community believes that each student has a right to an education free from fear and intimidation. Bullying is not tolerated. Bullying is a secret activity and difficult to detect. In order to ensure that no child should suffer in this way communication between the home and the school is most important. The vast majority of children at school are unaffected by bullying behaviour. There is no need for parents/guardians to worry unduly. However the following signs/symptoms may suggest that a young person is being bullied.

A student who has been happy at school losing interest and enthusiasm for school

- This may be reflected in deterioration in school performance
- Anxiety about travelling to and from school – requesting parents to drive or collect them
- Unwillingness to attend school. Worrying about the route to school
- Damage to bicycles or personal property e.g. clothes, books or loss of same
- A student returning from school in a very bad humour but reluctant to say why
- Unexplained changes of mood. These will often occur before the restart of school– e.g. at the end of the weekend or the end of holidays
- Frequent minor illnesses, especially headaches and stomach aches, difficulty in sleeping, not eating. These often accompany the mood changes mentioned above
- An increase in requests for money
- Unexplained cuts and bruises
- Recurrent nightmares

These signs do not necessarily mean that a student is being bullied. However, if repeated or occurring in combination, these signs do need investigation.

Making Contact with the School

The best way to make contact with the school about bullying is by telephone or letter. Going in person can put pressure on a child. They may be afraid of being called a “rat” or of what their classmates will think. On the phone or by letter an appointment can be made to speak to the appropriate person.

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When Bullying Happens

- The first thing to do is to assure the young person that the problem lies with the bully and not with them. This removes the guilt many people feel when they are bullied.
- A written record of the incidents should be kept with date, time, people and brief details.

General Points

A young person who has high self-esteem is most unlikely to be the victim of long-term bullying.

Parents can help to build up self-esteem in their children, by encouraging them; by making them feel good about their appearance and getting them involved in activities inside and outside school. Any activities, which lead to a sense of achievement, will help build self-esteem.

Sometimes a young person may be over-sensitive. They need to learn to tell the difference between the kinds of treatment almost everybody is subjected to from time to time and behaviour that is hurtful.

When Parents and the School work together Bullying is less likely to happen.

SUPERVISION & MONITORING OF PUPILS / MAOIRSEACHT & MONATÓIREACHT DALTAÍ

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.

PREVENTION OF HARASSMENT / CIAPADH A CHOSC

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 2 May 2014.

12. This policy has been made available to school personnel and published on the school website. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

13. 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. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: _____ **Signed:** _____
(Chairperson of Board of Management) (Principal)

Date: _____ **Date:** _____

**Coolmine Community School
Anti- Bullying Charter**

I HAVE THE RIGHT TO:	I HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY TO STRIVE TO ENSURE:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be physically safe• Expect my property to be safe in school• Be free from all forms of verbal bullying• Be free from cyber bullying• Be free from extortion• Be free from emotional bullying• Be free from identity based bullying including homophobic bullying and transphobic bullying• Be free from any hurtful remarks regarding person, ethnicity, religion or culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Others are physically safe• The property of others is safe• Others are free from verbal bullying• Others are free from cyber bullying• Others are free from extortion• Others are free from emotional bullying• Others are free from identity based bullying including homophobic bullying and transphobic bullying.• Others are free from any hurtful remarks regarding person, ethnicity, religion or culture

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My Notes:



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