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Coolick National School's Anti-Bullying Policy

Introduction

The Coolick National School community believes that each pupil has a right to an education free from fear and intimidation.

The school regards bullying as a serious infringement of individual rights and a serious threat to the self-esteem and self-confidence of targeted pupil(s). Therefore it does not tolerate bullying of any kind.

Every report of bullying is treated seriously and dealt with, having due regard for the well being of the targeted pupil(s) and the perpetrator(s).

An 'Anti-Bullying Team,' made up of staff members, exists to cultivate an environment free from bullying.

The immediate priority, should a bullying incident occur, is ending the bullying, (*thereby protecting the person(s) being targeted*) and resolving the issues and restoring the relationships involved insofar as is practicable using a 'Reform, not Blame' approach.

All pupils are expected to contribute to the creation and maintenance of a safe environment in the school. On becoming aware of any bullying situation, in or outside the school, involving members of the school community they should notify a trusted responsible adult. Bullying behaviour is too serious not to report.

Pupils' participation in school life in general is encouraged through existing school structures. Awareness of bullying, and willingness to take action to prevent or stop it, is part of this participation.

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 Coolick 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;

- 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 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.

This definition includes a wide range of behaviour, whether verbal or written, whether physical or social, whether targeting person or property, whether carried out directly or indirectly or through any electronic or other medium, which could harm a pupil or undermine her/his self-esteem or self-confidence.

Appendix 1 gives a list of specific examples of bullying behaviour. This list is not exhaustive.

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 Teachers' for investigating and dealing with bullying in this school are as follows:
   - The Class Teacher(s) initially
   - The Deputy Principal thereafter if necessary
   - The Principal
   - Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity based bullying) used by the school are as follows:

   - Prevention and awareness raising measures across all aspects of bullying involving strategies to engage pupils in addressing problems when they arise. In particular, such strategies need to build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils

   - Provide pupils with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth

   - Prevention and awareness raising measures focusing on cyber-bullying by educating pupils on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while online (Webwise lessons and Stay Safe programme)

   - Teachers can influence attitudes to bullying behaviour in a positive manner

   - There are a number of curriculum components and programmes which are particularly relevant to the prevention of bullying and the promotion of respect for diversity and inclusiveness. The SPHE curriculum makes specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the inter-related areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships. The Stay Safe & RSE programmes at primary level are personal safety skills programmes which seek to enhance children's self-protection

skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying. The Religious Education programme emphasises respect for self and others.

- The work may be extended into many other areas such as Art, Drama and Physical Education. Co-operation and group enterprise can be promoted through team sports, school clubs and societies as well as through practical subjects.

- Pupils may engage with NEPS programmes such as Friends For Life and Zippy's Friends on a biannual basis or as necessary.

- Pupils are helped to examine the issue of bullying in a calm rational way, outside of the tense context of particular bullying incidents. In the process they are made more aware of the nature of bullying and the various forms that it can take.

- Pupils are made aware that the consequences of bullying behaviour are always bad for those who are targeted, even if this is not always obvious at the time.

- Pupils are encouraged to recognise, reject and report bullying behaviour, either spontaneously or through questionnaires that are regularly used in the school.

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:

- The 'Relevant Teacher' investigates all instances of reported or suspected bullying behaviour, with a view to establishing the facts and bringing any such behaviour to an end.
- The School, through the 'Relevant Teacher' reserves the right to ask any pupil to write an account of what happened, as part of an investigation. This will be a standard procedure and does not necessarily imply that a pupil is guilty of misbehaviour.
- Pupils who are alleged to have been involved in bullying behaviour are interviewed by the 'Relevant Teacher' to establish the nature and extent of the behaviour and any reasons for it.
- The 'Relevant Teacher' does not apportion blame but rather treats bullying behaviour as a 'mistake' that can and must be remedied. S/he emphasises that the intention is not to punish perpetrators but to talk to them, to explain how harmful and hurtful bullying is.
- When an investigation is completed and/or a bullying situation is resolved the 'Relevant Teacher' will complete a report, to include the findings of the investigation, the strategy adopted and the outcome of the intervention, as well as any other relevant information. The report should be completed using the Bullying Record template – See Appendix 2
- All documentation regarding bullying incidents and their resolution is retained securely in the school.
- Sanctions:
Where a pupil has been found to be engaged in bullying behaviour, any of the following sanctions may be imposed:

- ✓ In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher(s) 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 explain the actions being taken. The school should give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils.
- ✓ It must be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required that this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school.
- ✓ Follow up meetings with the relevant parties involved may be arranged separately with a view to bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.
- ✓ An additional follow up meeting with the parents of the children involved may take place after an appropriate time to ensure the matter has been resolved satisfactorily.

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:

- Bullied pupils:
  - ✓ Ending the bullying behaviour,
  - ✓ Changing the school culture to foster more respect for bullied pupils and all pupils,
  - ✓ Changing the school culture to foster greater empathy towards and support for bullied pupils,
  - ✓ Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through an awareness-raising programme,
  - ✓ Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the speedy identification of those responsible and speedy resolution of bullying situations,
  - ✓ Helping bullied pupils raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school).
- Bullying pupils:
  - ✓ Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are not blamed or punished and get a 'clean sheet,'
  - ✓ Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are doing the right and honourable thing and giving them praise for this,
  - ✓ Helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school),
  - ✓ Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils' feelings of self-worth,

- ✓ In dealing with negative behaviour in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child,
- ✓ In dealing with bullying behaviour seeking resolution and offering a fresh start with a 'clean sheet'.

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. The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps as 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 9th, 2024.

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website *and is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request* and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and to 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 and *be otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request* and provided to the Parents' Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available to the Department of Education and to the patron if requested.

Ciara Irwin Foley   Gearóid O Sullivan

Chairperson, Board of Management   Principal & Secretary of Board of Management

02/12/2024   02/12/2024

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Appendix 1

Bullying can take a number of forms. These may include any of the following. This list is not exhaustive.

- **Repeated aggressive behaviour/attitude/body language, for example:**
  Shouting and uncontrolled anger

  Personal insults

  Verbal abuse

  Offensive language directed at an individual

  Continually shouting or dismissing others

  Public verbal attacks/criticism

  Domineering behaviour

  Open aggression

  Offensive gestures and unwanted physical contact.

- **Intimidation, either physical, psychological or emotional, for example:**
  Treating in a dictatorial manner

  Ridicule

  Persistent rudeness in behaviour and attitude towards a particular individual

  Asking inappropriate questions/making inappropriate comments re. personal life/family

  Asking inappropriate questions/making inappropriate comments re. social life or schoolwork

- **Interference with property, for example:**
  Stealing/damaging books or equipment

  Stealing/damaging clothing or other property

  Demanding money with menace

  Persistently moving, hiding or interfering with property

  Marking/defacing property

- **Undermining/Public or Private Humiliation, for example:**
  Condescending tone

  Deliberately withholding significant information and resources

  Writing of anonymous notes

  Malicious, disparaging or demeaning comments

  Malicious tricks/derogatory joke

  Knowingly spreading rumours

  Belittling others' efforts, their enthusiasm or their new idea

  Derogatory or offensive nicknames (name-calling)

  Using electronic or other media for any of the above (cyber bullying)

  Disrespectfully mimicking a particular individual in his/her absence

  Deliberately refusing to address issues focusing instead on the person

- **Ostracising or isolating, for example:**
  Deliberately marginalizing an individual

  Deliberately preventing a person from joining a group

  Deliberately preventing from joining in an activity, schoolwork-related or recreational

Things that may indicate bullying:

- Anxiety about travelling to and from school, unwillingness to go to school, refusal to attend, mitching
- Deterioration in motivation, concentration, work rate, educational performances or all of these
- Changes in mood – loss of confidence, growing shyness, withdrawal
- Unexplained changes in behaviour – stammering, displays of anger, aggressive behaviour (towards siblings) out of character comments
- Pattern of physical illnesses, stomach/bowel disorders, loss of appetite, vomiting, loss of sleep, nightmares (possibly reported by parents)
- Possessions missing or damaged, requests for (lunch) money
- Unexplained bruising, cuts or other injury or damaged clothing
- Reluctance/refusal to say what is troubling her/him

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Appendix 2 -Recording Bullying Behaviour

1.Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name _____Class_____

2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

3. Source of bullying concern/report
(tick relevant box(es)

Pupil concerned	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

4. Location of incidents
(tick relevant box(es))

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other	

5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern

6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)

Physical Aggression		Cyber-bullying	
Damage to Property		Intimidation	
Isolation/Exclusion		Malicious Gossip	
Name Calling		Other (specify)	

7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

9. Details of actions taken

Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____