

# Gaelscoil na Camóige

## Anti-Bullying Policy

**A)** 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 Gaelscoil na Camóige 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.

**B.** 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.

**C.** 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.

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Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

**D.** 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):

1. The Class Teacher
2. The Deputy Principal- Eimear Billings
3. The Principal- Aoife Ní Raghallaigh
4. The Board of Management

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):

Our school climate encourages respect, trust, care, consideration and support for others.

As pupils model their behaviour on the behaviour of adults, Principal and teachers are careful to act as good role-models and not misuse our authority. Moreover, we should be firm, clear and consistent in our disciplinary measures. We favour techniques based on positive motivation more than methods that are based on threat and fear.

Note: Factors having their origins in differences or conflicts between parties outside the school may contribute to increased incidents of bullying within the school.

Periodic summary reports to the Board of Management

At least once in every school term, the Principal must provide a report to the Board of Management setting out:

- (i) the overall number of bullying cases reported (by means of the bullying recording template published by the Department of Education and Skills) since the previous report to the Board and
- (ii) confirmation that all cases referred to at (i) above have been or are being dealt with in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy and the Anti- Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools.

The minutes of the Board of Management meeting must record the above but in doing so must not include any identifying details of the pupils involved.

Raising the awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teachers, pupils and parents/guardians.

Gaelscoil na Camóige, is committed to raising the awareness of bullying in our school community so that we are more alert to it and its harmful effects. This will be done by:

- Circulation of School Policy and availability of resource materials. Policy to be issued annually, at the start of the year to parents.
- Meeting and talks for parents organised by CAIRDE Parent's Committee
- Friendship Week annually.
- Programmes such as Stay Safe/Bí Sábháilte Programme already in use in our school and further programmes, e.g. Human Development Programme will be used to help address the problem of bullying behaviour.

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- Anti- Bullying Workshops every second year, for Senior classes- 5th & 6th – emphasis on supporting both the victim and the bully
- Gardaí Visit Annually- 5th & 6th Class
- In-service courses for teachers on aspects of bullying behaviour to raise awareness and develop techniques to deal with such behaviour.
- Special Assembly for all classes based on the theme of Bullying once a term.
- “Worry Box” in every class, 2nd- 6th Class
- Resources from Webwise during Safer Internet Day & Lessons for Senior Classes

**E.** 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) :

## **Procedures for Noting and Reporting an incident of Bullying Behaviour.**

In this school we have a "Record of Bullying Behaviour"

1. In this school we have a "Record of Bullying Behaviour" procedure for the formal noting and reporting of an incident of bullying behaviour and this such procedure should be seen to be an integral part of the Code of Behaviour and Discipline in the school. This system should, also, provide for early detection of signs of indiscipline and/or significant change in mood or behaviour of pupils.
2. All reports of bullying, no matter how trivial, should be noted, investigated and dealt with by teachers. In that way pupils will gain confidence in "telling". This confidence factor is of vital importance.
3. All cases of bullying behaviour by pupils should be referred immediately to the Principal.
4. Parents or guardians of victims and bullies should be informed by the Class Teacher or Principal earlier rather than later of incidents so that they are given the opportunity of discussing the matter. They are then in a position to help and support their children before a crisis occurs.
5. The classroom teacher is the appropriate person to whom Parents/guardians can make their enquiries regarding incidents of bullying behaviour which they might suspect or that have come to their attention through their children or other parents/guardians.
6. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not telling tales, but are behaving responsibly.
7. Individual teachers should record and take appropriate measures regarding reports of bullying behaviour in accordance with the school's policy and Code of Behaviour and Discipline.
8. Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, Special Needs Assistants, caretakers, cleaners should be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the appropriate member of staff.
9. In the case of a complaint regarding a staff member, this should normally in the first instance be raised with the staff member in question and if necessary, with the Principal.

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10. Where cases relating to either a pupil or a teacher remain unresolved at school level, the matter should be referred to the School's Board of Management.
11. In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

### **Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying.**

Teachers are best advised to take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour reported by either 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. In any incident of bullying, the teacher should speak separately to the pupils involved, in an attempt to get both sides of the story. All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way.

1. When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour 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.
2. If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually and then the group should be brought together. Each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone is clear about what everyone else has said.
3. If it is concluded that a pupil has engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the Code of Behaviour and Discipline and try to get him/her to see the situation from the victim's point of view.
4. Each member of the group should be helped to handle the possible pressures that often face them from the other members after an interview by the teacher.
5. The Deputy Principal can become involved in the questioning process at this stage to provide support to the Class teacher if this is deemed necessary. This would help to resolve the situation before the Principal is actively involved.
6. Teachers who are investigating cases of bullying behaviour should keep a written record of their discussions with those involved. The teachers will use the template for recording bullying behaviour as issued in the Department of Education and Skills Anti-Bullying procedures for Primary and Post Primary schools. It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident.
7. In cases where it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, meet with the parents or guardians of the two parties involved as appropriate. Explain the actions being taken and the reasons for them, referring them to the school policy. Discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions taken by the school.
8. Arrange follow-up meetings with the two parties involved separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the victim is ready and agreeable. This can have a therapeutic effect.

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**F.** 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) :

Pupils involved in bullying behaviour need assistance on an ongoing basis. For those low in self-esteem opportunities should be developed to increase feelings of self-worth. Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may need to be provided a Social/ Emotional/Behavioural Intervention Plan to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others. Victims may need intervention and opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem and to develop their friendship and social skills whenever this is needed.

Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour should be encouraged to discuss them with teachers. Follow up support will be provided by teachers for children who observe Bullying behaviour- Workshops in Self-confidence, Managing Emotions, Self-Esteem will be provided, if necessary.

A copy of this policy has been made available to all relevant parties.

- (1) It will be promoted by the school managerial authorities within the school on a repeated basis with particular attention being given to incoming pupils and their parents.
- (2) We would ask everyone to co-operate in implementing the policy.

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored and evaluated. It will be subject to review at regular intervals

## **G. 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.

## **H. 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.

- I.** This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 17/04/2024 [date].
- J.** This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.
- K.** 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 (or where none exists, be otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.
- L.** Appendix 4 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures 2013 is a helpful tool, when undertaking the yearly review of this policy.

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This policy was reviewed in September 2015

This policy was reviewed in December 2016

This policy was reviewed in December 2021

This policy was reviewed in January 2023

This policy was reviewed April 2024

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal)

Date: \_\_17/04/24\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_17/04/24\_\_\_\_\_

Date of next review: \_April 2025\_\_\_\_\_