

Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the anti-bullying policy

To: Parents/Staff of Collon NS.

The Board of Management of Collon NS wishes to inform you that:

- The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of 6/10/21 [date].
- This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in Appendix 4 of the Department's *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

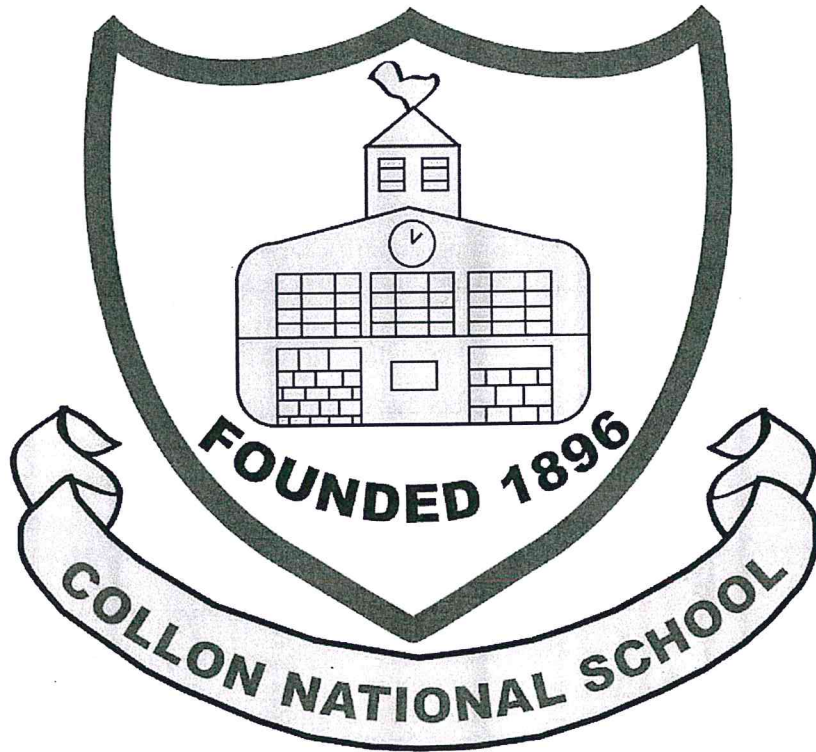
Signed [Signature]  
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date 6.10.2021.

Signed Anne-Marie Martin  
Principal

Date 6/10/21.

# **Collon National School**



## **Anti- Bullying Policy**

## Anti-Bullying Policy

Collon National School, School Lane, Collon, Co. Louth

Roll No: 14578N

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 Collon 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 including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
  - Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
  - Supports for staff. (NEPS, INTO, CPSMA, PDST, IPPN) \* see Appendix 1
  - 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 including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation. (Gender, including trans gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community)

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. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is the child's 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*):

### Education

The SPHE curriculum is a mandatory component of the Primary curriculum. SPHE is intended to support the personal development, health and well being of young people and help them to create and maintain supportive relationships.

The SPHE curriculum will be fully implemented in all classes. SPHE lessons are covered at a specific time every week across all classes : 1pm every Wednesday afternoon.

The Stay Safe Programme will be taught every year. This is a personal safety skills programme. The programme seeks to enhance children's self protective skills by participation in lessons on safe and unsafe situations, bullying, inappropriate touch, secrets, telling and stranger danger.

RSE will be taught in all classes every year. RSE encourages children to reflect on the relationships in their lives and to learn how to develop relationships which are based on mutual respect. RSE promotes a holistic understanding of sexuality and provides young people with information about their physical development and sexual health.

On the issue of Cyber bullying. The Garda Education officer visits the school annually and gives a talk to pupils in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class on the issue of Cyber Bullying. Specific Internet Safety Seminars are run every year for pupils and parents eg Zeeko in conjunction with the Parents Association.

Resources are available in the school , Prim Ed Bullying in a Cyber World books have been purchased and are available to all staff to help deal with issues, should they arise. These books are available in Early Years, Lower and Middle. From September 2014 all classes will be taught lessons specifically on internet safety. Lessons from the Webwise programme are used by school staff to introduce internet safety, during SPHE lessons.

### Prevention

Our school ethos and culture. We have a school wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of our school community and encourage the sense of belonging to our school.

Staff Professional development is encouraged amongst all staff. Some of our school staff have trained in Zippys' Friends, Friends for Life and Incredible Years programmes. Professional development will be shared amongst staff.

Pupil's Mobile phones are not allowed in school. If a pupil is found to have a mobile phone turned on in school it is immediately confiscated and parents are informed.

Internet access is strictly supervised by staff if children are accessing the web. There is an Acceptable Use policy in place in Collon National School.

Effective supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra curricular activities. Non teaching and ancillary staff will also be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers.

Promotion of telling, while on yard or in the classroom.

Buddy Benches in two yard areas.

Annual Well Being & Friendship Week.

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:

1. The primary aim for the relevant teacher in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame);
2. In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her **professional** judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
3. **All reports**, including anonymous reports of bullying, **made by a child/parent of a child**, must be investigated and dealt with by **the relevant teacher**. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
4. Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers, cleaners must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.
5. Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible;
6. It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset.
7. Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents;
8. **Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.**
9. 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;
10. When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should 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;
11. If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed **individually** at first. Pupils from 2<sup>nd</sup> class up will be asked to give a written account of the bullying incidents.
12. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements.
13. Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher. The teacher will then determine that bullying has occurred.
14. **In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved should be contacted by the relevant teacher to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken.** At this stage the Principal/ Deputy Principal should be informed of the bullying behaviour. 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.

15. Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear, by the relevant teacher, to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
16. It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school.
17. **Follow-up** meetings with the relevant parties involved should be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable. This can have a therapeutic effect.
18. In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded by the relevant teacher in the recording template
19. In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:
  - Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
  - Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
  - Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable; and
  - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal
20. Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
21. 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 Recording Bullying

If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

The teacher must use the recording template at Appendix 3 in Anti Bullying Procedures 2013 to record the bullying behaviour at step 14 in the procedures. The Principal or Deputy Principal must be informed of the bullying behaviour at this point also.

The teacher must retain a copy of the Recording template and a copy must also be provided to the Principal/ Deputy Principal.

### Serious Cases

In cases where there are serious concerns in relation to managing the behaviour of a pupil, the advice of the National Education Psychological Service (NEPS ) will be sought.

In situations where “the incident is serious and where the behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive, the school must consult the HSE Children and Family Social Services with a view to drawing up an appropriate response , such as a management plan”.

Serious instances of bullying behaviour should, in accordance with the Children First and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools, be referred to the HSE Children and Family Services and/or Gardai as appropriate.

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

- The overall number of bullying cases reported (written reports by means of recording template at Appendix 3) since the previous report to the Board

And

- Confirmation that all cases referred to above have been or are being dealt with in accordance with the school’s anti bullying policy.

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

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 programme of support will be put in place, such as playground buddies, Circle time, Friend’s for Life .

Children may need opportunities to participate in activities to raise their self –esteem, to develop friendship/ social skills.

Pupils with low self –esteem need opportunities to increase feelings of self worth.

Follow up consultation will take place between school and parents. Also follow up meetings with pupils on an on going basis following an incident of bullying.

Close monitoring of pupils (those bullying and those being bullied) on the yard in the weeks following an incident of bullying.

## 8. Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies, (Supervision policy, School Code of Behaviour and Child Protection Policy )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 6/10/2021 [date].

11. 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.

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 provided to the Parents' Association. 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:

6.10.2021.

Date:

6/10/21.

Date of next review:

October 2022

## Appendix 1

NEPS : National Educational Psychological Service

INTO : Irish National Teachers Organisation

CPSMA : Catholic Primary Schools Management Association

PDST : Professional Development Service for Teachers

IPPN: Irish Primary Principal's Network

## Appendix 4 Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation. The following checklist must be used for this purpose. The checklist is an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. In order to complete the checklist, an examination and review involving both quantitative and qualitative analysis, as appropriate across the various elements of the implementation of the school's anti-bullying policy will be required.

	Yes /No
Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools</i> ?	Yes
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	Yes
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	Yes
Is the Board satisfied that school staff are sufficiently familiar with the policy and procedures to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy and procedures in their day to day work?	Yes
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	Yes
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	Yes
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	Yes
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	Yes
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	Yes
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	Yes
Has the Board discussed how well the school is handling all reports of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and not therefore included in the Principal's periodic report to the Board?	Yes
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	No
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	No
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	No
Has the data available from cases reported to the Principal (by the bullying recording template) been analysed to identify any issues, trends or patterns in bullying behaviour?	Yes
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	Yes
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	Yes

Signed [Signature]  
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date 6.10.2021

Signed Anne-Marie Martin  
Principal

Date 6/10/21

Principal to  
share  
professional  
development  
amongst  
staff.