

Coláiste Choilm Tullamore



Anti-Bullying Policy

(February 2025)

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 Choilm 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 students 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 students 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) that:
 - ✓ build empathy, respect and resilience in students; and
 - ✓ explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
 - Effective supervision and monitoring of students.
 - Supports for staff.
 - Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies).
 - 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 a minority group/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 and may result in suspension.

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour, Remote Learning Policy and Acceptable Use Policy.

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 (are) as follows: (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

All teachers have a responsibility to deal with bullying issues as they arise. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with an incident of bullying are the Year Heads. Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it, e.g. the Group Leaders on a school tour.

- 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*):

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*):

- We regularly remind staff and students of the importance of living up to ideals expressed in our school's Mission Statement.
- Our induction programmes place special importance on friendship and the importance of being caring and supportive of one another.

- The school has a policy of praising positive behaviours and teachers take the opportunity to write positive comments about students on VS Ware and in their journal.
- Students are encouraged to participate in school sports and extra-curricular activities which enable them to work as part of a team and develop positive relationships with their fellow students.
- Classes such as SPHE and CSPE are used to examine the issue of bullying and the various forms it can take. Other subjects may be used to explore the topic from different angles.
- Posters, drama workshops, wellbeing weeks and other events are used to point out the negative effects of bullying on those who are targeted by it and those who witness it.
- Class and subject teachers as well as those on supervision duties during break and lunchtimes watch out for any form of behaviour which might leave a student open to bullying or for signs of distress which might indicate that bullying is going on.
- Student Council members, members of the Cáirde team and class prefects are encouraged to watch out for any problems and to report any concerns around bullying to the relevant class teacher, member of the anti-bullying team or Year Head. Students are encouraged to recognise, reject and report bullying behaviour to the anti-bullying team or another trusted teacher.
- The school journal highlights the importance of reporting bullying whenever it occurs as do anti-bullying/respect for all signs placed all-round the school.
- The Parents' Council raises awareness of bullying issues through a regular programme of talks from experts in the field.
- All aspects of bullying prevention are dealt with regularly as part of continuing professional development for staff.
- Holding a Mental Health/Anti-Bullying week and LGBTQ Week.
- Initiatives which deal explicitly with identity based bullying include; LGBTQ posters around the school building, LGBTQ Week, SPHE (in Junior Cycle) and RSE modules (in Senior Cycle).
- We encourage parents to approach the school authorities if they feel their child is being bullied. They can have confidence in the school's determination to help and support their child. Similarly, parents are reminded that if their child is involved in bullying behaviour, they have a responsibility to support the school's anti-bullying policy and address their child's inappropriate behaviour.
- School wide delivery of lessons on Relational Aggression, Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying, Diversity and Interculturalism.
- Accessing the support of Community Gardaí and Offaly Youth Services to cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying.

- The school has a policy of praising positive behaviours and teachers take the opportunity to write positive comments about students on VS Ware and in their journal.
- The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.
- All subject teachers strive to promote respect, harmony and tolerance in their classrooms.

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 (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

An Anti-Bullying Team made up of staff members exists to cultivate an environment free of bullying in the school and to handle any incidents of a bullying nature if and when they arise.

When bullying occurs, students or anybody who becomes aware of it should report it at the earliest opportunity. However, we know that many students view the reporting of bullying in a negative way. We feel strongly that this culture needs to change. From anecdotal evidence students indicated that they would fear reprisals from bullies if they were seen to be punished by the school authorities for their bullying behaviour.

A student reporting bullying does so in order that the bullying stops and not with the intention of getting anybody in trouble. We want to make it "safe" for students to come to a staff member to report bullying behaviour without fearing further negative consequences from the bully. To achieve this, we undertake not to punish a student for a first bullying offence reported to us, but only provided that the student signs a solemn promise to stop the bullying behaviour immediately and give a solemn undertaking that they will be no negative repercussions for the targeted student. All reports of bullying will be taken seriously and thoroughly investigated. Records will be kept by the Anti-Bullying Team and any recurrence of the reported bullying behaviour will be handled in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.

When bullying is reported, the intention is to end the suffering and distress it is causing. To achieve this, students and their parents must be truthful in their reporting of bullying and must co-operate fully with the school's efforts to tackle the problem. This includes allowing the school to mention the name of the student who is being bullied to the alleged bullying student and his parents.

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 member of the Student Support Team will be available, if the student wishes, for one-to-one meetings to listen to the student in a supportive way.

8. Supervision and Monitoring of Students

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. Prevention of Harrassment

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 09/09/2022.
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 (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.

Signed: *Fiona Flanagan*
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: 26/02/2025.

Signed: *Tadhg O'Sullivan*
(Principal)

Date: 26/02/2025.

Review of policy This Anti-Bullying policy is reviewed in compliance with the Board of Management's policy for the cyclical review of all school policies as set out in The School Plan. 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.

Appendix 1 Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate

The following are some practical tips for immediate actions that can be taken to help build a positive school culture and climate and to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour.

- ✓ Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.
- ✓ Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- ✓ Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.
- ✓ Catch them being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- ✓ Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN.
- ✓ Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- ✓ Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.
- ✓ Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.
- ✓ Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use. Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.
- ✓ Actively involve parents and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media.
- ✓ Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.
- ✓ Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.
- ✓ All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- ✓ Ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.
- ✓ School staff can get pupils to help them to identify bullying “hot spots” and “hot times” for bullying in the school.
 - ✚ Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas, changing rooms, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision.
 - ✚ Hot times again tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when pupils are in the playground/school yard or moving classrooms.
- ✓ Support the establishment and work of student councils.

Appendix 2 Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name: _____ Class: _____

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

Name: _____ Class: _____

Name: _____ Class: _____

Name: _____ Class: _____

Name: _____ Class: _____

3. Source of bullying concern/report and Location of incident(s)

Source of bullying concern/report [tick relevant box(es)]		Location of incidents [tick relevant box(es)]	
Pupil concerned		School grounds	
Other pupil		Classroom	
Parent		Corridor/toilets	
Teacher		School bus	
Other		Other	

4. Name of person who reported the bullying concern

Name: _____

5. Type of Bullying Behaviour [tick relevant box(es)]

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

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

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

8. Brief description of bullying behaviour and its impact _____

9. Details of action taken _____

Signed: _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date: _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal: _____

Appendix 3 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 Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools?	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?	Yes
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	Yes
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	Yes
Has the data available from cases reported to the Principal (by the bullying recording template) been analysed to identify any trends or patterns in bullying behaviour?	No
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

Coláiste Choilm

Notification regarding the Board of Management's review of the Anti-Bullying Policy

To: All School Personnel, Coláiste Choilm Parents' Association and all members of Coláiste Choilm wider school community.

The Board of Management of Coláiste Choilm 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 06/02/2024.
- 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 *Fiona Flanagan*

Date 26/02/2025.

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed *Tadhg O'Sullivan*

Date 26/02/2025.

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management