

Le Chéile Secondary School
Ballincollig



Anti-Bullying Policy



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

1. INTRODUCTION

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 Le Chéile Secondary School, Ballincollig, 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.

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;
- 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.

2. DEFINITION OF BULLYING

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.

2.1: Types of Bullying

The following are some of the types of bullying behaviour that can occur among pupils:

- **Physical aggression:** This behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While pupils may engage in 'mess' fights, they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.
- **Intimidation:** This may be based on the use of very aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon. Particularly upsetting can be a facial expression which conveys aggression and/or dislike.
- **Isolation/exclusion and other relational bullying:** This occurs where a certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or all of the class group. This practice is usually initiated by the person engaged in bullying behaviour and can be difficult to detect. It may be accompanied by writing insulting remarks about the pupil in public places, by passing around notes about or drawings of the pupil or by whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard. Relational bullying occurs when a person's attempt to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. This can include controlling the person – 'do this or x will happen' – a group ganging up against one person; non-verbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumours about a person or giving them the 'silent treatment'.
- **Name calling:** Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) which hurts, insults or humiliates should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name-calling of this type refers to physical appearance e.g. size or clothes worn. Accent or distinctive voice characteristics may attract negative attention. Academic ability can also provoke name-calling. This tends to operate at two extremes, those singled out for attention because they are perceived to be weak academically or those that are singled out as high achievers.
- **Damage to property:** Personal property can be the focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, school books and other learning material or interference with a pupil's locker or other property. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.
- **Extortion:** Demands for money may be made, often accompanied by threats (sometimes carried out in the event of the targeted pupil not delivering on the demand). A pupil may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to another pupil engaged in bullying behaviour.
- **Cyber-bullying:** This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies through:
 - text messaging and picture messaging on mobile phones/ hand held devices
 - social media websites
 - email
 - instant messaging
 - in a chat room
 - on gaming websites and other websites

The most common forms of cyber-bullying are:

- Sending abusive/mean text messages or messages that breach the nine discriminatory grounds
- Posting abusive/mean messages or comments on online forums/social networking sites
- Hacking into a person's social networking account
- Creating false social network accounts/websites
- Impersonation on social media sites
- Spreading rumours through mobile phones or online

2.2 Harassment and sexual harassment

The term bullying encompasses harassment and sexual harassment, defined as follows:

Harassment: *any form of unwanted conduct in relation to any of the nine grounds named in the equality legislation that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment for the victim. The nine discriminatory grounds are gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion and membership of the Travelling community.*

Sexual harassment: *any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment for the victim.*

3. RELEVANT TEACHERS TO CONTACT IN CASES OF BULLYING

The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying in this school are as follows:

- Principal
- Class Teacher
- Chaplain
- Any staff member / One significant Adult
- Student Support Team members

4. WHOLE SCHOOL EDUCATION AND PREVENTION STRATEGIES

To build a positive school culture and climate to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour, Le Chéile Secondary School, Ballincollig will:

- Publish the Anti-Bullying Policy on the school website www.lecheileballincollig.ie
- Include anti-bullying strategies in the school journal
- Through both curricular and extra-curricular programmes students will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth
- The implementation of regular whole-school awareness measures e.g. anti-bullying presentation communicated to all stakeholders, lunchtime activities, annual friendship month, annual kindness week, parent/guardian seminars; regular year group assemblies by Principal, Deputy Principal and Year Head; and a teacher / mentor programme
- A school-wide approach to fostering an attitude of respect for all: to promote the value of diversity; to address prejudice and stereotyping and to highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour. This will be emphasised to students through their subject teachers.
- Provide information about bullying to parents and wider school community and through Parents' Association meetings.
- Maintain and further develop an awareness of bullying and its consequences among students through school programmes and initiatives.
- Whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develops an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it – prevention and intervention.
- Professional development with specific focus on the training of relevant teacher(s).
- Invite guest speakers to address students/teachers/parents as appropriate
- Display key respect and anti-bullying messages throughout the school.
- Class Teachers will inform students of the Anti-Bullying policy, speak to classes and year groups about the unacceptability of bullying and the need to report any incident of bullying observed or suffered.
- Members of school staff will be vigilant for instances of bullying and will bring such incidents to the attention of the relevant teachers.
- Appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place at Le Chéile Secondary School to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour.
- There will be regular communication between Class Teachers, Year Heads and students.
- Class and Year Group assemblies are positive in nature. The focus on respect and development of the whole person while promoting class and year group Spirit and unity.
- There is a 10min student support class with the class teacher and students each day.

- Mentor teachers are assigned to small groups of students.
- Involvement of the Student Council, Meitheal team and Leadership team in contributing to a safe school environment that can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- Involvement in peer teaching on bullying.
- Through the 'Cool for School' Anti-Bullying programme, encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It will 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.
- Ensuring that pupils know how to tell, e.g:
 - Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class
 - Hand a note up with homework
 - Make a phone call to the school or to a trusted teacher in the school
 - Get a parent / guardian or friend to tell on your behalf
 - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Identify clear protocols to encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school by contacting the class teacher / Year Head if they suspect that their child is being bullied.
- Weekly meetings of the Student Support Team and Middle-Management Team with the Principal / Deputy Principal
- Implementation of the curricula
 - The full implementation of the SPHE, CSPE and RSE.
 - Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes
 - School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes
 - School-wide delivery of age-appropriate lessons
 - Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programme at post-primary level. These lessons delivered by Community Gardaí cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying.
 - 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.
 - The school will refer to Sexual Orientation Advice for schools'
 - A comprehensive induction programme for 1st year students facilitates a smoother transition from primary to secondary school. First year students are met regularly to assess how they are settling into school. The informal curriculum e.g extra-curricular activities and lunch-time activities provides a space for pupils to form friendships and build confidence and self-esteem

5. PROCEDURES FOR INVESTIGATING AND DEALING WITH BULLYING

The primary aim 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).

5.1 Reporting bullying behaviour

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

5.2 Investigating and dealing with incidents: Style of approach

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the (relevant)teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;

- Parent(s)/guardian(s) 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;
- Teachers will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.
- Where possible incidents will be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
- All interviews will 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;
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This will 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 interviewed individually at first and may be asked to write an account of the incident(s). Thereafter, if appropriate all those involved will be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member will be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements;
- Each member of a group will be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after the interview by the teacher;
- Those involved may be asked to write down their account of the incident(s)
- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the parties involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy). The school will give parent(s)/guardian(s) an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the pupils;
- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts will be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;
- It will also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parent(s)/guardian(s)) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, her parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school;

5.3 Follow up and recording

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;
- Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardian(s) or the school Principal or Deputy Principal
- 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.
- Where a parent(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
- In the event that a parent(s)/guardian(s) has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

5.4 Recording of bullying behaviour

It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

- Informal pre-determination that bullying has occurred
 - All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher
 - While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher must keep a written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same
 - The relevant teacher must inform the principal of all incidents being investigated.
- Informal-determination that bullying has occurred
 - 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.
 - All records retained by the relevant teacher shall be stored in the Deputy Principal's office.
 - The relevant teacher must use the recording template at Appendix 1 to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:
 - In cases where he/she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred.
 - When the recording template is used, it will be retained by the Principal in records will be kept in the Principal's office for a period of 5 years after the student leaves the school.

6. ESTABLISHED INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

- Teacher interviews with all pupils
- Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress.
 - This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process.
 - Any follow-up will be recorded.
 - Restorative interviews
 - No Blame – No anger approach in as far as is practicable. However, sanctions may be imposed as appropriate.
 - Working with parent(s)/guardian(s) to support school interventions
 - The traditional disciplinary approach
 - Mediation
 - Targeted educational intervention

7. SUPPORT FOR PUPILS AFFECTED BY BULLYING

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

- All in school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience.
 - Teacher/student mentoring system
 - Class Teacher system
 - Student support system
- If pupils require counselling or further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same.
- This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.
- Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

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. 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. OVERSIGHT

Periodic summary reports to the Board of Management.

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

- (i) the overall number of bullying cases reported through the (Child Protection Oversight Report) 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.
- (iii) The minutes of the Board of Management meeting will record the above but in doing so must not include any identifying details of the pupils involved.

11. Other School Policies relevant to the Anti-Bullying Policy

The following school policies, practices and activities are particularly relevant to bullying:

- Code of Behaviour
- Child Protection Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Extra-Curricular Activities Policy
- Health and Safety Statement
- Critical Incident Management Plan
- Relationships and Sexuality Education Policy
- Admissions Policy
- Induction for new staff and students
- Dignity in the Workplace

12. Ratification of Anti-Bullying Policy

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 9th Dec. 2021 [date].

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website, is readily accessible to parents and pupils on request. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

13. POLICY REVIEW

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year as per Review Checklist (Appendix 2). 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: Tony Lee (Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: 09/12/21

Date of next review: No later than 09/12/22

Signed: M. S. C. Bennett (Principal) Date: 09/12/21

APPENDIX 1 – REPORTING TEMPLATE

1. Name of pupil allegedly being bullied and class group.

Name _____ Class _____

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

Name: _____	Class: _____
Name: _____	Class: _____
Name: _____	Class: _____
Name: _____	Class: _____

(Add as appropriate)

3. Source of bullying concern/report (tick as appropriate)

4. Location of incidents (tick as appropriate)

Pupil concerned	_____	School Yard/Grounds	_____
Other Pupil	_____	Classroom	_____
Parent	_____	Corridor	_____
Teacher	_____	Bathroom	_____
Other	_____	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 _____

Appendix 2: Note

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Le Chéile Secondary School, for the first time on Thursday 9th December, 2021. The Appendix 2 checklist will be used at the first review of the policy which will take place, not later than 9th December 2022.

Signed; Tony Lee. Date: 09/12/21

Mr. Tony Lee
Chairperson, Board of Management