



**Muire Na Dea Chomhairle Infant School,
Mourne Road,
Drimnagh,
Dublin 12.**

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

June 2017

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 **Muire Na Dea Chomhairle Infant 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.

This policy should be read in conjunction with all relevant policies

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;
- 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 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.

See appendix 1 for a greater breakdown of examples of forms of bullying

See appendix 2 for Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate

See Appendix 3 for recording template

See appendix 4 for checklist for annual review

See appendix 5 for breakdown of Cyber – Bullying

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

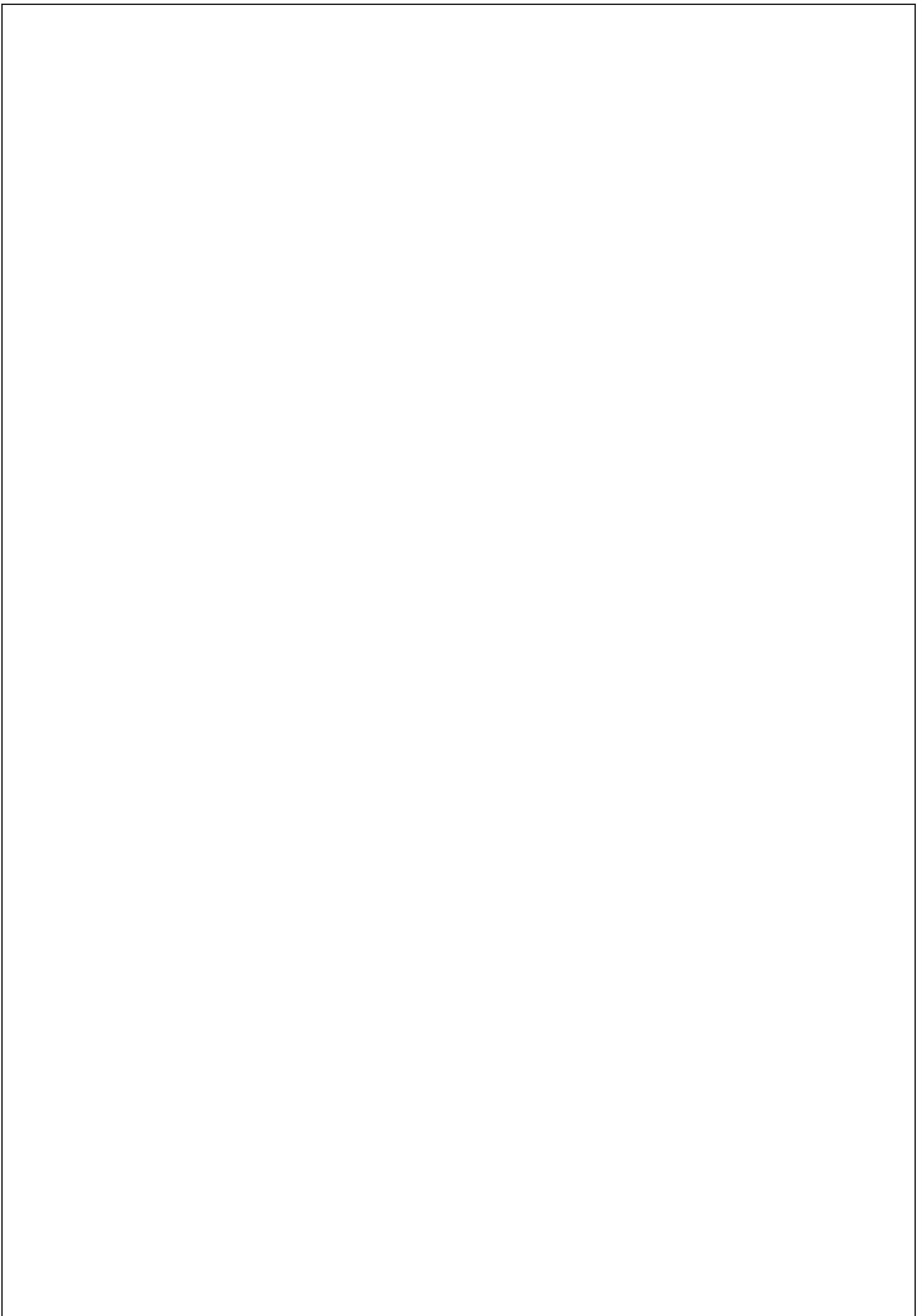
Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows:

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

All teaching staff at Muire Na Dea Chomhairle are relevant teachers.

- Class Teacher
- Principal
- Deputy Principal



5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically * aimed at cyber- bullying, 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*):

- Teachers can influence attitudes to bullying behaviour in a positive manner through a range of **curricular initiatives**. 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.
- Praise and Positive Reinforcement by teachers and school staff of acceptable and/or improved behaviour by pupils will help in creating a school culture which discourages bullying.
- Implementation of the* **Stay Safe Programme** every year as laid out in our **SPHE** policy .The **Stay Safe** programme at primary level, is a personal safety skills programme which seeks to enhance children's self-protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying. Pupils are taught Rules for keeping safe from bullies i.e (1) Say 'No' using assertive body language and eye contact, (2) Get Away, (3) Tell Someone
(From Personal Safety Skills for Senior Infants/First Classes - Stay Safe Programme)
- Appropriate lessons from ***Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE)** dealing with relationships and designed to enhance self-esteem are a core element of the school curriculum ie ***Stay Safe, Alive~O, Walk Tall, Be Safe, Bí Follain** etc 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. Pupils are helped to understand what constitutes Bullying by regular class time discussions on the topic. This includes both perspectives ie 'being bullied' and 'being a bully'.
- Yard time in the Infant School provides a wide range of opportunities for teachers to daily equip children with essential life skills in dealing with conflict and resolution of.
- ***RSE** is taught within the context of SPHE which is timetabled as part of the Infant School curriculum for all classes. Respect for themselves and others is encouraged.

- Friendship & Inclusion are first and foremost fostered and encouraged in our school, every effort is made to build on self-esteem and an attitude where children reflect on their behaviours with an emphasis on respect. Friendship week is planned for and takes place every year with all classes involved
- Modelling of respectful behaviour by all staff, sets an example for the children while every child is listened to and given an opportunity to discuss any issues arising around friendships.
- SEN pupils are given an opportunity to discuss concerns/worries. Our SEN team with responsibility for SEN pupils have strategies in place for dealing with those pupils who have issues around anger management, expression of feelings, emotional outbursts.. Children in our Autism Unit are welcomed and every effort is made to ensure their needs are met at whole school level. A strong focus is placed on inclusion for SEN pupils generally with particular focus on social skills on IEPs / IPLPs in the classroom, yard and school in general.
- Staff CPD (Continuous Professional Development)
- **ICT Policy**
- Supervision and monitoring of pupil activities, in class and particularly in the school yard, where bullying is most likely to occur. Identifying "hotspots" where supervision is less structured. Yard buddies assigned during yard times to ensure inclusiveness and encourage participation.
- Acknowledgement of good behaviour through the individual teacher's reward system's in class awards, catching children being good (Principal) and affirmation of positive behaviour on " Fantastic Friday"
- Other activities designed to explore and express feelings in a safe and respectful environment e.g. Circle Time and Role Play, group work. think pair share, will be also used with a view to preventing bullying.
- School rules based on respecting each other.

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*) :

While bearing in mind that all incidents of bullying must be dealt with promptly, it should be noted that there are varying degrees of bullying and different situations call for differing responses. (i) 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);

- 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;
- 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);
- All reports including anonymous reports of alleged bullying of any kind including Cyber-bullying Identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based disabilities or special educational needs must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
- Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners should report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;
- Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
- When analyzing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher will seek answers to questions – What? Where? When? Who? Why? This will be done in a calm manner setting an example of dealing effectively with conflict. If a number of pupils are involved each pupil will be interviewed separately and asked to explain their version of events.
- **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 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; as follows...**
- Listen to the Parent/Pupil with allegation - make written note of incident i.e. dates details etc

- Meet with alleged Victim – and listen to their version of events - note the victims body language – reassure them that the incident merits attention – get the victim to describe how he/she felt when bullied
- Meet with the alleged Bully – and listen to their version of events -- get them to describe how the victim may have felt – assign appropriate sanctions (see Code of Behaviour) and make them aware that they have broken the school rules and how you expect them to behave
- Bring the Bully and Victim together – emphasize responsibilities for actions – Discuss outcome (and sanctions if relevant) - Reinforce the need for caring and helpful behaviour between children
- Brief relevant teachers, parents of victim and bully and outline non acceptable behaviour, action taken and sanctions
- Monitor both victim and bully, Praise and Reinforce improved behavior

See step 2 of COB

- The relevant teacher must record the bullying behaviour in the standardized recording template at **Appendix 3** (and a copy must be provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable)**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;and

*** In extreme cases ie when the problem persists and all the above steps have been exhausted including intervention by Principal, matter may be referred to the Board of Management. Ultimate sanction for ongoing incidents of bullying is suspension/exclusion from school for a specified number of days (in accordance with BOM Policy on Discipline) To ensure that any such cases are dealt with appropriately, our school's anti-bullying policy is linked with our overall Code of Behaviour and provides for referral to be made to relevant external agencies and authorities where appropriate.**

- 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;
- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgment, 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 relationship 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
-
- 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;
 - 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
-
- **It must be made clear to all involved 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; the sanctions being placed on a pupil involved should not be made known to any other pupils, even those involved**

7.The School's Programme of Support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows

- Pupils who have been bullied will be offered sessions with the SEN teachers to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed.Class Teacher/Principal also have an important role.

- Pupils involved in bullying behaviour will need assistance on an on-going basis. For those with low self-esteem, opportunities should be developed to increase feelings of self-worth through the **SPHE programme/RSE/Stay Safe/ Teacher Training in Incredible Years**

- The continuum of **Support for Behavioural,Emotional and Social Difficulties(Guidelines for teachers)** will be employed to aid children affected by bullying and those involved in the bullying behaviour Link with **NEPS**

In relation to bullying in schools, Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011 (Children First) and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools provide that 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 will, 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 Gardaí as appropriate.

The Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools also provide that where school personnel have concerns about a child but are not sure whether to report the matter to the HSE, the DLP must seek advice from the HSE Children and Family Social Services.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Whilst all reports of bullying will be investigated by the relevant teacher it must be stated that where the incidents of bullying are occurring outside of the school environment and/or outside of school hours the school may not be able to fully resolve with these matters. The school will direct those involved to the appropriate agencies ie Gardaí/Community Garda Service, HSE, or other community service

- Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour should be encouraged to discuss them with teachers.

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 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 26th June 2017

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. 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: _____

Date: _____

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _____

Date: _____

(Principal)

Date of next review: _____

Appendix 5

Cyber – Bullying

UNDERSTANDING CYBER-BULLYING:

- Cyber bullying is the use of ICT (usually a mobile phone and or the internet) to abuse another person
- It can take place anywhere and involve many people
- Anybody can be targeted including pupils and school staff
- It can include threats, intimidation, harassment, cyber-stalking, vilification, defamation, exclusion, peer rejection, impersonation, unauthorized publication of private information or images etc.
- While bullying involves a repetition of unwelcome behaviour the **Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools, September 2013**, states:

2.1.3. In addition, in the context of these procedures 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.

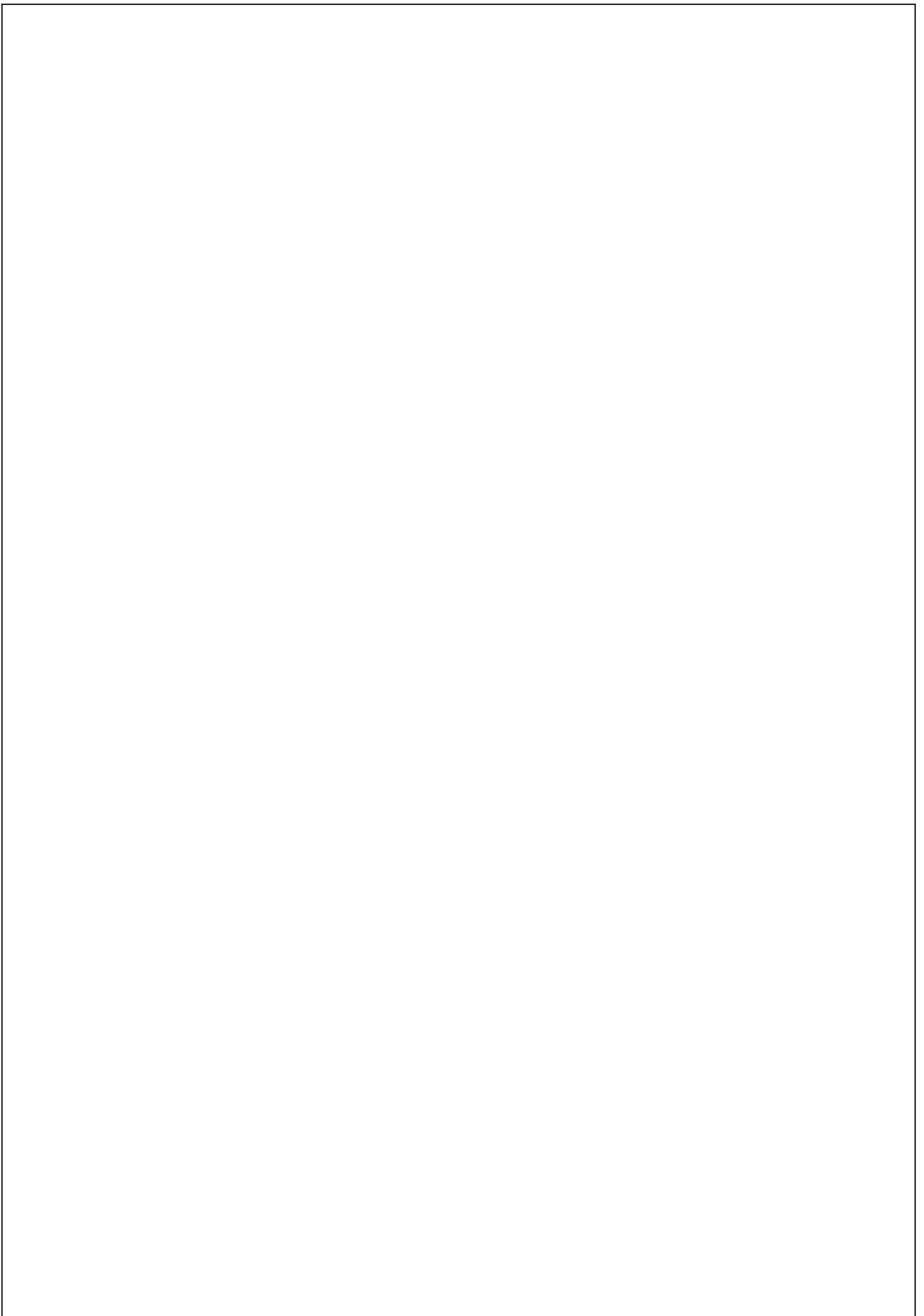
WHAT IS CYBER-BULLYING?

There are many types of cyber-bullying. The more common types are:

1. **Text messages** – can be threatening or cause discomfort. Also included here is 'Bluejacking' (the sending of anonymous text messages over short distances using bluetooth wireless technology)
2. **Picture/video-clips via mobile phone cameras** – images sent to others to make the victim feel threatened or embarrassed
3. **Mobile phone calls** – silent calls, abusive messages or stealing the victim's phone and using it to harass others, to make them believe the victim is responsible
4. **Emails** – threatening or bullying emails, often sent using a pseudonym or somebody else's name
5. **Chat room bullying** – menacing or upsetting responses to children or young people when they are in a web-based chat room
6. **Instant messaging (IM)** – unpleasant messages sent while children conduct real-time conversations online using MSM (Microsoft Messenger), Yahoo Chat or similar tools
7. **Bullying via websites** – use of defamatory blogs (web logs), personal websites and online personal 'own web space' sites such as You Tube, Facebook, Ask.fm, Bebo (which works by signing on in one's school, therefore making it easy to find a victim) and Myspace – although there are others.

Explanation of slang terms used when referring to cyber-bullying activity:

1. **'Flaming'**: Online fights using electronic messages with angry and vulgar language
 2. **'Harassment'**: Repeatedly sending offensive, rude, and insulting messages
 3. **'Cyber Stalking'**: Repeatedly sending messages that include threats of harm or are highly intimidating or engaging in other on-line activities that make a person afraid for his or her own safety
 4. **'Denigration'**: 'Dissing' someone online. Sending or posting cruel gossip or rumors about a person to damage his or her reputation or friendships
 5. **'Impersonation'**: Pretending to be someone else and sending or posting material online that makes someone look bad, gets her/him in trouble or danger, or damages her/his reputation or friendships
 6. **'Outing and Trickery'**: Tricking someone into revealing secret or embarrassing information which is then shared online
 7. **'Exclusion'**: Intentionally excluding someone from an on-line group, like a 'buddy list'
- This list is not exhaustive and the terms used continue to change.



Appendix 2 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 ignored.
 - 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 council

Appendix 3 Template for 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	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Pupil	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

Playground	<input type="checkbox"/>
Classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corridor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Toilets	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

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

Physical Aggression	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cyber-bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>
Damage to Property	<input type="checkbox"/>	Intimidation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Isolation/Exclusion	<input type="checkbox"/>	Malicious Gossip	<input type="checkbox"/>
Name Calling	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

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9. Details of actions taken

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Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date _____
 Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

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> ?	
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	
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?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	
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?	
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	
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?	
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	

Signed _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date _____

Signed _____
Principal

Date _____

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

To: _____

The Board of Management of _____ 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 _____ [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 _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date _____

Signed _____
Principal

Date _____

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 slagging
- Deliberate staring with the intent to discomfort
- Persistent rudeness in behaviour and attitude toward 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 menaces
- 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 marginalising an individual
- Deliberately preventing a person from joining a group
- Deliberately preventing from joining in an activity, schoolwork-related or recreational
- Blaming a pupil for things s/he did not do

