Gaelcholaiste Charraig Uí Leighin Anti-Bullying Policy

It is our aim in Gaelcholáiste Charraig Uí Leighin to have a friendly and pleasant learning environment where everybody can work and learn free from any form of bullying. We try to achieve that aim through co-operation from all the school stakeholders, as described in the school's aims.

1) According to the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (September 2013), bullying is defined as:
   An unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

   We include the following behaviours in the above definition of bullying:

   a) Intentionally excluding a person from activities, part-take in malicious conversations about someone and any other type of bullying behaviour towards another person.

   b) Cyber bullying, i.e., any bullying done using technology. This needs to occur once only to be classified as bullying.

   c) Bullying someone based on their identity, such as homophobic bullying, bullying someone based on them being a member of the Travelling Community, bullying a person based on their Race, Religion, Domestic Background or Ethnicity, bullying a person with a physical disability, bullying a person based on their family circumstances or formation, or special learning needs.

   d) An isolated incident where an insulting or hurtful text message, image or comment on a chat forum is posted.

e) Posting or reposting a hurtful or insulting image, comment or message on any form of social media that is visible to any other person and that could be reposted by that person.

f) Bullying someone to cause damage to their relationships or social status.

g) Bullying behaviour in the form of intimidation.

Each of the above examples will be dealt with appropriately in accordance with the Code of Behaviour of the school. The above list is not exhaustive, and any other incidents of bullying will be dealt with under the Code of Behaviour also.

2) This Anti-Bullying Policy is designed in accordance with the Education Act 2000 (Amended) and the guidelines set out in the Code of Behaviour by the National Education Welfare Board. This policy fully complies with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools published in September 2013.

3) 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) A positive school culture and climate which is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
b) Who encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment;
c) Promotes respectful relationships across the school community;
d) Effective leadership;
e) A school-wide approach;
f) A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
g) Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils;
h) Explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
i) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
j) Supports for staff;

k) Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies);

l) On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

4) 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:

   a) deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,

   b) cyber-bullying

   c) 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.

   d) 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.

   e) 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.

   This is not an exhaustive list.

5) School management understands the seriousness of bullying behaviour and the potential negative effect it has on students, and will therefore follow the following guidelines of best practice to help prevent incidents of bullying:

   a) Having a positive culture in the school where:
   - Individuality and difference are accepted and respected.
   - Students will report incidents of and/or bullying behaviour in an unrestricted way.
   - Everybody in the school community will have respect for one another.
   - Respect, fairness and integrity are values actively promoted in the school.

b) Educating people on what bullying is and the negative impact it has on people.

c) Effective leadership that will give good example by forming strong, positive relationships with others in the school community.

d) Forming educational and preventative strategies that will increase the school community's awareness of this topic.

e) Recording and investigating incidents of bullying in a consistent manner.

f) Evaluating the effectiveness of this policy on an on-going basis.

g) Every staff member will monitor bullying behaviour and will have a duty to report any concerns to the appropriate staff members, including the Principal and the Deputy Principal.

h) SPHE, CSPE and Religion class will be used to support our anti-bullying policy and to foster respect and tolerance for difference.

i) Students are encouraged to report to school management, or any teacher, any of the above examples that happen to them, or any other person.

j) Developing self-respect in students by identifying and valuing good behaviour.

k) Supporting students to develop their sense of empathy by discussing emotions and helping them place themselves in the position of others.

l) Teachers will respond sensitively to students who report incidents of bullying and will further investigate any incidents of bullying reported to them.

m) Discussing the Anti-Bullying policy at the beginning of the school year and regularly throughout the school year.

n) The Students Council will organise events during Anti-Bullying week that highlight the issue of bullying.

o) The school will hold Internet Safety talks to educate students and parents on how to stay safe online and will monitor students' iPads throughout the academic year.

p) The school will adopt a school-wide approach to combat bullying. The school will engage with management, students, parents and staff and will hold information meetings for parents.

q) The Board of Management will be informed of any cases that have not been resolved within twenty days of being reported to the school.

r) The school will encourage students to embody both the school ethos, and that of our patron, Cork ETB.

6) In the case of bullying arising in the school, the following intervention strategies will be used to deal with such cases (See Section 6.8 of Department of Education and Skills Procedures):

a) Where a member of teaching staff has a concern about a student being bullied, s/he may investigate and deal with the matter in accordance with the procedures set out in the Section 6.8. of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools. Alternatively, the teacher may refer the matter to the Year Head, Principal or Deputy Principal.

b) Teachers are welcome to seek the assistance and support of the Principal, the Deputy Principal and the relevant Year Head.

c) The school reserves the right to investigate any allegations of bullying where bullying is perpetrated by a member of the school community and it impinges on the work or well-being of a student in the school, even where the bullying acts are committed outside of the school.

d) The school reserves the right, in accordance with Section 6.3.5 of the Department of Education and Skills Procedures, to seek the assistance of agencies such as National Educational Psychological Services, the HSE, the Gardaí, etc., where it deems such assistance is necessary.

e) Concerns about or allegations of bullying will be investigated and addressed in accordance with Section 6.8.9 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools. These are summarized as follows:

1. In investigating and dealing with bullying, the focus will be on reform, not 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. Any reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with either by the teacher who first becomes aware of the allegations, or the relevant member of the Pastoral Care team, or the Principal and/or Deputy Principal. The teacher will inform the Pastoral Care team of any bullying issues.

4. All non-teaching staff will be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them to either a teacher or the Principal or Deputy Principal.

5. Incidents of bullying will be investigated in a calm, unemotional, problem-solving manner.

6. Incidents of bullying will generally be investigated outside of the classroom to ensure the privacy of all involved.

7. All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard for the rights of students. Those investigating bullying behaviour will calmly seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why.

8. Where a group is allegedly involved in the bullying behaviour, each student will be interviewed individually in the first instance. Each member of a group will be supported through the possible pressures s/he may face from the other members of the group after being interviewed.

9. Where appropriate, those being interviewed may be asked to write down their account of what happened.

10. The parents 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 parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school.

11. Where the relevant teacher determines that a student 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 every reasonable effort will be made

to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the student(s) being bullied and the emphasis will be on a positive conclusion, not blame.

12. Where the school deems it necessary to impose disciplinary sanctions, it will be made clear to that this is a private matter between the student being disciplined, their parents and the school.

13. As a follow-up to a bullying issue being resolved, the relevant teacher should meet separately with the relevant parties to review progress. Subsequently, <u>but only</u> if the student who has been bullied is ready and agreeable, consideration should be given to meeting with both parties simultaneously as this can have a therapeutic effect.

14. Where a parent/guardian or a student who is more than 18 years old is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, s/he will be referred to the school's complaints procedures – see Section 6.8.9 of Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.
Where a parent/guardian or a student who is more than 18 years, having exhausted the school's complaints procedures, is still not satisfied s/he will be advised of his/her right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children - see Section 6.8.9 of Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

7) Programme of support for working with students affected by bullying – see Sections 6.8.15, 6.8.16 and 6.8.17 of the Department of Education and Skills Procedures.

The school will put in place a programme of supports for students who have been bullied. This programme will involve the following elements:

1. Students who have been bullied will be:

a) offered appropriate counselling; and
b) provided with opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self esteem, to develop their social skills and to build their resilience.

2. Students who have been involved in bullying behaviour will be:

a) provided with counselling to help them to learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others; and

b) provided with appropriate opportunities to build their self-esteem and feelings of self-worth

3. Students who observe incidents of bullying behaviour will be encouraged to discuss them with their teachers and their parents and to avail of counselling where they feel it may assist them to cope effectively with what they have experienced.

This policy will be reviewed regularly and will be available to all stakeholders.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on January 28th 2016.

It was last reviewed by the Board of Management on May 30th, 2024.

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

Name	Class

3. Source of bullying concern/report

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

4. Location of incidents;

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

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

_____
_____

6. Type of Bullying;

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;

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9. Details of actions taken;

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Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher)

Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____