

Confey Community College

Anti-Bullying Policy September 2014

- 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 Confey Community College 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.**

We believe we can make a difference by providing a quality education to our students in a caring and respectful environment. We value respect, fair play and everyone's right to be himself or herself. We aim to help our students to develop a sense of their own unique worth, to become their best selves and to respect the rights of others. We strive for good relationships between our students, our staff and our parents. We educate our students not only for now, but also for life. Our school motto is *Meas ar chách/respect for all*. In our school everybody is valued. Difference of any type does not make it acceptable to bully a person. Silence allows people to suffer. We speak out when we know we should. All people in this school have the right to be themselves, and the responsibility to treat others as they would like to be treated.

- 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.

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 Appendix 1 of this policy as per the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

4. The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying is are as follows:

A student, parent or any member of the non-teaching staff may bring a bullying concern to any teacher or other member of staff in the school (or directly to the Year Head) who will then report the matter to the Year Head. Parents or/Guardians suspecting incidents of bullying behaviour should contact the Year Head directly where possible.

The Year Head has responsibility for investigating and dealing with suspected bullying behaviour involving students in the relevant year group. In some instances other Year Heads, the Deputy Principal or Principal or Guidance Counsellor may be involved in the investigating phase, particularly where a large group are involved or when time is limited. In certain circumstances (e.g. school trips), the relevant teacher could be any member of teaching staff. The matter must be referred to the Year Head as soon as possible.

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:

- The school will liaise with primary schools as necessary to track any behavioural history relating to bullying. A survey will be carried out during the first term each year. This will give students the opportunity to express any individual concerns/reports of bullying.
- The school will provide all necessary information about bullying to parents of enrolling students. All parents/guardians will be given a copy of the Anti-Bullying Policy along with a copy of the Code of Behaviour on enrolment.
- The school will ensure that the buddies/prefect programme for 1st Years includes information about bullying.
- The school will ensure that the teaching staff is kept fully informed of policies and programmes and confirmed cases of bullying as necessary, and that all teachers are vigilant in this particular area.
- The school will maintain and further develop an awareness of bullying and its consequences among the student body through SPHE, CSPE, RSE, the buddies/prefects programme, posters, Anti-Bullying week, the Pastoral Care Team, the Students' Council and the Parents' Council.
- Excerpts from the Anti-Bullying Policy and other support materials will be visible throughout the school, in corridors and classrooms. The policy will be published on the school's website. Excerpts from the policy along with other relevant information will be included in the students' journal.
- Safe Internet Use will be promoted, educating students about safer and more responsible use of online technology and mobile phones, coordinated by ICT and SPHE teachers. The Anti-Bullying Policy operates in conjunction with the school's Internet Safety Policy.
- Through the process of School Self-Evaluation we will periodically evaluate the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy.
- Teachers of all subjects will aim to build empathy, respect and resilience in students and will act as positive role models.
- We will, through our curricular and extra-curricular programmes aim to develop in students a positive sense of self-worth and enhance their self-esteem.
- We aim to facilitate a culture whereby students, teachers and parents alike, are aware of their responsibilities where bullying is concerned. There are tips for parents with regard to bullying in Appendix 5. There is advice for students in Appendix 6.
- Those in leadership positions will always seek to use a positive approach when dealing with people e.g. teachers will reward positive or desired behaviours by giving praise.
- Whole staff professional development on bullying will ensure that all staff develop 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 the relevant teacher(s).
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parents/guardians and the wider school community.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, buses travelling to and from school, school tours and extra-curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers.
- The school will encourage the involvement of the student council in contributing to a safe school environment to encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- The school will encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly. They should be aware that there is no such thing as an ‘innocent bystander’.
- The school will ensure that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.: approach a teacher directly, hand up a note with homework, put a note under the door of the Guidance Counsellor’s door or get a parent/guardian or friend to tell on your behalf.

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:

Reporting and Recording

- I. All staff are required to report any concerns regarding bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them to the Year Head.
- II. All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. Any reported incident will firstly be investigated by the Year Head to establish whether or not bullying is actually taking place. The Year Head should use Record of Investigation: alleged bullying behaviour (Appendix 2). The Year Head must inform the Principal of all incidents being investigated.
- III. If it is established that bullying has occurred, appropriate records must be kept and filed in a designated confidential folder in the Year Head office and kept for at least seven years. The Year Head will keep written records of the investigation

Investigation

- IV. The Year head will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour.
- V. 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.
- VI. The school authorities will speak to both parties on a no-blame basis to establish what has happened and encourage them to solve the problem. As part of this process the student(s) involved will be made aware of how hurtful his/her behaviour is and that it must stop.

- VII. All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the Year Head. It will be made clear to all students that reporting incidents of bullying is not telling – they are behaving responsibly.
- VIII. Parents and students are required to cooperate 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.
- IX. Incidents will be investigated as discreetly as possible to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- X. All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all students concerned. Students who are not directly involved may also be interviewed.
- XI. Students involved in a bullying incident may be asked to write down their account of the incident.

Formal Stage 1-determination that bullying has occurred

- XII. In cases where it is determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the students involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and to explain the actions being taken.
- XIII. Where a student is found to have engaged in bullying behaviour it will be made clear to them how s/he is in breach of the anti-bullying policy and the effect on the other person(s).
- XIV. If disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the student being disciplined, his/her parents/guardians and the school. This will be made clear to all involved (each set of students and parents/guardians).

Formal Stage 2-Appendix 3 (From DES Procedures)

- XV. In determining whether the bullying behaviour has been adequately and appropriately addressed, the Year Head 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 practicable
 - Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as practicable and
 - Any feedback received from the students involved, their parents or the Principal or Deputy Principal.
- XVI. In cases where the Year Head considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after s/he has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, s/he must file a 'Record of bullying behaviour' with the Principal for further action (Appendix 3).
- XVII. In cases of serious physical assault, or threat of assault or where it is considered that there is a significant risk to the Health and Safety of any member of the school community the bullying behaviour needs to be immediately referred to the Principal and recorded on template (Appendix 3).
- XVIII. Serious instances of bullying behaviour (where the behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive) 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 Gardai as appropriate the school Designated Liaison Person. Repeated instances of bullying by the same guilty student will be referred by the Principal to the BOM for final decision.

- XIX. The College will advise on appropriate supports for those concerned.
- XX. Should a problem persist, the year Head will refer the matter to the Principal/Deputy Principal. Following further investigation and due process, the Principal may impose a term of suspension on any guilty party. Any further instances of bullying by the same guilty party may be referred by the Principal to the Board of Management.

Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedure.

- XXI. In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaint procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

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) :

Students who have been involved in bullying incidents will be advised by the Year Head/Deputy Principal/Principal of the availability of the Guidance Counsellor.

The target of bullying may receive counselling and/or opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise her self-esteem, to develop friendship and social skills and there by build resilience whenever this is needed.

The student involved in bullying behaviour may be referred to the Guidance Counsellor. This will be an opportunity to learn other ways of meeting his/her own needs without violating the rights of others.

Students who observe bullying behaviour are always encouraged to discuss it with a teacher. The assistance of the Guidance Counsellor may also be called upon by the student/parent/teacher if required.

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 by 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. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____ [date].

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

12. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website (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: _____
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _____
(Principal)

Date: _____

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____

Appnedix 1

The following is a list of examples of bullying behaviours – this list of examples is non exhaustive.

<p>General behaviours which apply to all:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 grounds are gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion, and membership of the Traveller community. • Physical aggression: pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people, severe physical assaults ‘mess fights’ can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain. • Taking or damaging property: damage to clothing, mobile phones, and school books etc, lockers. Scattering contents of school bags and pencil cases. Items of personal property defaced broken, stolen or hidden. • Name calling. • Slagging • The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person. • Offensive graffiti • Extortion: demands for money, sometimes accompanied by threats. Students forced into theft of property for delivery to another. • Intimidation: aggressive body language, aggressive or obscene language, facial expression which conveys aggression and/or dislike. • Insulting or offensive gestures • The ‘look’ • Invasion of personal space • A combination of any of the types listed.
<p>Cyber Bullying:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denigration: Spreading rumours, lies or gossip to hurt a person’s reputation • Harassment: Continually sending vicious mean or disturbing messages, images, text, audio or videos • Impersonation: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person’s name, creating a fake email using another person’s identity, • Flaming: Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight • Trickery: Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online • Outing: Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exclusion: Purposefully excluding someone from an online group • Cyberstalking: Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes person considerable fear for his/her safety • Silent telephone/mobile phone call • Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls • Abusive text messages • Abusive email • Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles • Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures • Abusive posts on any form of communication technology • Approving (liking) a negative comment or post about another student.
Identity Based Behaviours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation (gender, including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the traveller community).
Homophobic and transgender:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spreading rumours about a person’s sexual orientation • Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation • Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian...used in a derogatory manner • Physical intimidation or attacks • Threats
Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveler background • Exclusion on the basis of any of the above
Relational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying behaviours include: • Malicious gossip, isolation and exclusion, ignoring, excluding from the group, taking someone’s friends away, ‘bitching’, spreading rumours, breaking confidence, talking loud enough so that the victim can hear and giving the ‘look’
Sexual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching • 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.
Special Educational Needs, Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name calling, taunting others because of their disability or learning needs, taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying, taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues, mimicking a person's disability, setting others up for ridicule.