



Portumna Community School
Portumna,
Co. Galway.

Phone: (090) 9741053

Fax: (090) 9741392

www.portumnacs.ie

office@portumnacs.ie

Anti Bullying Policy; Version 2.2 revised in light of child protection procedures 2017

Version 2.2

Date of approval by Board of Management	16 th May 2018
Next date of review by Board of Management	May 2019

ANTI BULLYING POLICY

Contents

1. Introductory Statement	3
2. Scope	3
3. Rationale	3
4. Relationship to Mission and Ethos.....	4
5. Goals	5
6. Key Measures.....	5
7. Definition of bullying:	6
8. Harassment and the Prevention of Harassment	6
9. Definitions of types of bullying	7
10. Interventions:	7
11. Links to other policies	8
12. Roles and Responsibilities.....	8
14. Review and Evaluation	9

1. Introductory Statement

- 1.1 This policy was drawn up as part of the revision of the code of conduct during the school year 2010-2011. It was finalised in October 2011. It was revised in the light of the Department of Education and Skills Circular letter 45/2013 and associated guidelines in March 2014. *It was further revised in light of Child Protection Procedures 2017.* Bullying is dealt with in PCS as part of the management of student behaviour and involves educational steps, pastoral interventions and disciplinary action if needed.
- 1.2 Portumna Community School seeks to promote the full development of each individual and therefore rejects bullying as an attack on the dignity of the person which can undermine development and growth, both that of the person who suffers bullying and the perpetrator. Every person in Portumna Community School has the right to enjoy her/his learning and leisure free from bullying.
- 1.3 The policy was drafted by the Principal and the Chaplain, circulated to staff, made available to parents, students' council and ratified by the Board of Management on the 16th of May 2018.

2. Scope

- 2.1 This policy applies to the school student community in their relationships. Particular national policies apply to staff - student relations and this policy applies only to student-student conflict.

3. Rationale

- 3.1 This policy was developed as part of the review of the code of conduct. *It was further revised in light of Child Protection Procedures 2017.*
- 3.2 Department of Education and Skills requires schools to have a written policy on anti bullying. This was developed by circular letter 45/2013 which required all schools to have a policy which complies with the requirements of the procedures established in that circular letter. 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 Portumna Community 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.
- 3.3 The Trustees have a statutory obligation to ensure that all necessary policies are in place or are being developed.
- 3.4 Given the commitment of Portumna Community School to the highest standard of education we recognize that a stable, secure learning environment is necessary and that bullying undermines the

quality of education and results in harm to the person; therefore bullying will be positively and firmly addressed.

3.5 The entire school community has co-developed this policy in the belief that the resulting solidarity will be the best way to ensure the policy is implemented.

4. Relationship to Mission and Ethos

4.1 The Mission Statement of the school states that the school will seek to develop the potential of the students in their social, physical, intellectual and spiritual development. Such development demands that students be supported appropriately, challenged effectively and learn to respect the differences between them. The revised code of conduct accepts the equality of students and the need for a variety of responses to situations that may arise from time to time. This anti bullying policy seeks to provide students with a secure foundation so that their potential may be realised.

4.2 In keeping with the Circular letter 45/2013 we reiterate

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: [Continuing Professional Development](#)

- Consistent recording using appropriate appendices, investigation by Year Head or Assistant Year Head or Deputy Principal and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.
- In keeping with the revised child protection procedures for primary and post primary school is 2017 the school draws attention to section 2.3.5 where bullying is dealt with by the school authorities in the first instance, in keeping with circular 00 45/2013. The school also draws attention to the provision where bullying is regarded as possibly abusive a referral may be made to TUSLA or on Garda Siochana. When section 9.7 of child protection procedures 2017 applies the Board of Management shall be informed accordingly.

5. Goals

- 5.1 To create a positive and respectful environment.
- 5.2 To establish definitions, roles and procedures so that all staff, students and parents may be aware of the steps of investigation and imposition of sanction if deemed appropriate.
- 5.3 To deal with allegations of bullying promptly and to resolve them as far as possible for the school to do so.

6. Key Measures

- 6.1 In keeping with the Circular Letter 45/2013, Section 5 which references Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* the education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber- bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:
- 6.2 Creating a positive and respectful environment will be achieved through the following:
- 6.2.1 Social Personal and Health Education classes; Assemblies; Religious Education classes; Buddy system for First Years, Friendship week as part of a wider student Wellbeing week; external agencies; Acceptable Use Policy;
- 6.3 Information will be gathered proactively in the following manner:
- 6.3.1 Invite students to write names of those possibly having a difficult time, having a “reporting school” culture; Cairde leaders; a special email address where students can access the Student Support team and school management at an appropriate level.

7. Definition of bullying:

7.1 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.

7.2 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.

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

8. Harassment and the Prevention of Harassment

8.1 It should be noted that while bullying is defined as 'repeated' incidents, one incident of harassment and/or sexual harassment is considered a breach of the Equal Status Acts (2000 and 2004).

Harassment is defined as "unwanted conduct" under the Equal Status Acts (2000 and 2004).

Allegations of harassment will be dealt with under the revised Code of Conduct.

8.2 Portumna Community School rejects harassment and regards it as unacceptable behaviour. In keeping with Circular 45/2013 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

9. Definitions of types of bullying

- 9.1 **Physical Aggression:** this includes but is not limited to pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people up.
- 9.2 **Damage to property,**
- 9.3 **Extortion** (demands for money),
- 9.4 **Intimidation,**
- 9.5 **Abusive telephone calls and /or texts (See also cyber bullying below),**
- 9.6 **Isolation** (a person is isolated, excluded or ignored by a group),
- 9.7 **Name Calling,**
- 9.8 **Slagging** (this includes but is not limited to: repeated personal remarks about a person, their appearance, their family or sexual orientation).
- 9.9 **Cyber bullying:** this includes bullying by means of electronic devices or networks (internet and internal school network). Refer also to the school's Acceptable Use Policy in relation to Information Technology.
- 9.10 **Homophobic bullying and /or Transphobic bullying:** this is bullying that is motivated by a dislike or fear of someone because of the real or perceived lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender identity of the individual being targeted.

10. Interventions:

- 10.1 In common with the revised Code of Conduct there will be pastoral, disciplinary and educational interventions. In keeping with the Circular and Revised Guidelines bullying incidents will be reported to the Board of Management.
- 10.2 **Pastoral interventions** may include but are not limited to:
One to one pastoral support; professionally mediated meetings between parties involved; outside agencies (Health Service Executive, Youth Advocacy Program, National Educational Psychological Service); random checks on class or year groups in assemblies; a special email address will offer students an opportunity to alert the school to difficulties they or another student may be having.
- 10.3 **Disciplinary interventions** may include but are not limited to;

In keeping with the revised CODE OF CONDUCT sanctions may include apology, contract of good behaviour, restorative actions including community service to the school, withdrawal of privileges, other sanctions as may be deemed appropriate, suspension and permanent exclusion from school. Referral to outside agencies may include: Gardai and or TUSLA.

10.4 **Educational interventions** may include but are not limited to:

Referral to outside agencies (National Educational Psychological Service), Health Service Executive, referral to private counselling for anger management, parent meetings to give information on the topic.

10.5 **Creating a positive and respectful environment will be achieved through the following:**

Social Personal and Health Education classes; Assemblies; Religious Education classes; Cairde Mentors system for First Years, **Friendship** week as part of a wider student **Wellbeing** week; external agencies; Acceptable Use Policy;

10.6 **Information will be gathered proactively in the following manner:**

Invite students to write names of those possibly having a difficult time, having a “reporting school” culture; Cairde leaders; a special email address where students can access the Student Support team and school management at an appropriate level.

11.Links to other policies

11.1 The acceptable use policy for the internet and computer use (AUP) governs the usage of the school’s computers, networks and internet facilities in conjunction with the revised Code of Conduct.

11.2 The revised Code of Conduct with its emphasis on the need for respect for all, may be used to uphold the dignity of the person. Child Protection Procedures 2017 govern the school response if bullying is regarded as possibly abusive.

12.Roles and Responsibilities

12.1 The school management is responsible for ensuring that the policy is implemented.

12.2 Parents / Guardians have a role in being vigilant, stopping bullying behaviour by their own children, reporting instances of bullying they witness or suspect.

12.3 All staff are to be vigilant and intervene professionally and appropriately if needed in situations where bullying is suspected. All staff will report instances of suspected bullying to the appropriate Year Head. The Year Head will apply this policy and its interventions, inform the Student

Support team and refer to senior management if needed in keeping with the revised Code of Conduct.

- 12.4 The role of every student is to make Portumna Community School a school where human dignity is respected at all times. In keeping with this the responsibility of every student is to report instances of suspected bullying.
- 12.5 In keeping with Circular 45/2013, Section 4 which refers to Section 6.8 of the Anti Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools the relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are: The Year Heads, the Chaplain, the Guidance Counsellor, the Deputy Principal, the Principal. Note that the Year Head is the appropriate first point of contact for those seeking to report bullying.
- 12.6 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*) :
- 12.7 Year Head will conduct an investigation and fill out the template; Year Head will confer with Deputy Principal and Chaplain (and or Guidance Counsellor) and the Chaplain (and or Guidance Counsellor) will then interview all involved with a view to reaching a pastoral solution which may involve apology, restorative justice etc.

13. Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils

- 13.1 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.

14. Review and Evaluation

- 14.1 This policy will be reviewed in **May 2019** and thereafter every year. A member of the Student Support Team will present a statistical report of bullying and /or alleged bullying cases at each end of year staff meeting.
- 14.2 This report will form the basis for an end of school year report by the Principal to the Board of Management. A random survey of students will be done at the end of each Friendship week to establish the effectiveness of the week and how it can be improved.
- 14.3 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: May 2019