



Anti-Bullying Policy

2023-2024

Reviewed by Board of Management: 12 December 2023

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 Deansrath 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.

2. The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of students 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 students 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 students; and
 - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
 - Effective supervision and monitoring of students;
 - 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.

Tips for how to build a positive school culture and climate are contained in Appendix 1.

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 Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

4. The relevant teacher for investigating and dealing with bullying is the Year Head.

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:

- Anti-bullying training with 1st Year students by the Clondalkin Youth Service
- Promotion of anti-bullying through the curriculum and in particular SPHE, Pastoral Care and Religious Education.
- Parental involvement through parents' evenings, coffee mornings
- Prefect system
- Internet usage policy
- Supervision of students on school premises
- Continuing Professional Development
- Pastoral Care
- SPHE class
- Restorative Practice
- Year Head/Tutor System
- Chaplain
- Belonging + Transition programme for 1st years
- Care Team
- Guidance Counsellor
- Home School Liaison Officer
- School Completion Project
- Counselling Service
- Clondalkin Youth Service
- Anti-bullying week/ Friendship Fortnight
- Stand-Up Week
- Reporting to Designated Liaison Person in line with Child Safeguarding Procedures

Social and Communications Media

- Development of Deansrath Social and Communications Media policy.
- Deansrath Digital Agreement (Parents' Form for accepting and agreeing to various digital acceptable usage policies, including social media image use consent agreement, Students' Portable electronic device agreement, MS 365 Acceptable Usage Policy).
- Social Media Participation in the yearly Webwise Safer Internet day competition

- Social media campaigns on LGBTQI+ rights
- Social Media campaigns on wellbeing
- Social media campaigns that facilitate student voice

Anti-Bullying Week/ Friendship Fortnight

This is a cross-curricular, whole school community initiative aimed at reducing the incidence of bullying within the school. Various activities are co-ordinated with the theme of anti-bullying including:

- Anti-Bullying workshops for students
- Design a poster competition (Art)
- Anti-Bullying lessons (SPHE/Pastoral Care)
- Internet Safety and Cyber Bullying (IT)
- Human/Civil Rights lessons (CSPE/History)
- Justice/ Relationships/Morality (Religion)
- Suitable texts/drama/poetry dealing with Bullying (English/Languages)
- Debating
- Student council meetings
- Prefects/mentor system
- Keywords connected with bullying (Cross Curricular)
- Random acts of kindness programme (Whole school)
- "Worry box" for each year group
- Student survey on bullying
- Review of Anti-Bullying policy

6. Reporting of incidents of bullying or suspected bullying is everyone's responsibility. All reports of bullying, no matter how trivial, will be noted and investigated by the school.

- Students should discuss any suspected or alleged incident of bullying with a teacher or another trusted adult within the school. This is responsible behaviour rather than "telling tales". Students should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all alleged incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.
- Any staff member who witnesses or becomes aware of suspected incidences of bullying should report the incident to the relevant Year Head.

- Parents/Guardians should contact the Tutor/Year Head regarding any alleged incidents of bullying behaviour which they might suspect or that have come to their attention through their children or other parents.

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 set out below. It is very important that all involved (including each set of students and parents) understand the approach from the outset. The procedures are based on the following principles:

- (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 practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame);
- (ii) Parents and students are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible;
- (iii) A calm, unemotional problem-solving approach will be taken when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by students, staff or parents;

Investigation

- All parties are interviewed by the relevant teacher. All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all students concerned. Students who are not directly involved can also provide useful information in this way;
- It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of incident(s);
- If a group is involved, each person will be interviewed individually at first. The relevant teacher will use professional judgement as to whether a group meeting might then be considered. At the group meeting, each member should 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 the group will be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher;
- 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.

Follow-Up

- Where the relevant teacher has determined 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 efforts will be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the student being bullied;

- It will also be made clear to all involved (each set of students and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the student being disciplined, his or her parents and the school;
- If deemed appropriate, a Restorative Practice meeting will be facilitated if the student being bullied is ready and agreeable;
- The Care Team may be consulted for their professional expertise if deemed appropriate or necessary.

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 practicable
- Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as practicable; and
- Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or school management.

Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents will be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaint procedures.

Recording

- Where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and to explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy). Parents will be given an opportunity to discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports being offered to the students;
- If it has been 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 relationships;
- Where it has been established by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the recording template at Appendix 2 must be completed in full, retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal.

In some instances behaviour may escalate beyond that which can be described as bullying to serious physical or sexual assault or harassment. To ensure that such cases are dealt with appropriately, this anti-bullying policy should be read within the overall framework of the Code of Behaviour. Referral to outside agencies and authorities may also be made as deemed appropriate.

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

All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the students affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience.

- Pastoral care system
- Peer Mentoring/ Prefect system
- Restorative Practice
- Tutor/Year Head system
- Care Team
- Student Supports – guidance counsellor/ chaplain/ counsellor/Behaviour for Learning

If students require counselling or further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be for the students affected by the bullying or those involved in the bullying behaviour.

8. Supervision and Monitoring of Students

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 students or staff or the harassment of students 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 12 December 2023.

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 (Appendix 3). 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)

Date: 

Signed: 12/12/2023
(Principal)

Date: 12/12/2023

Date of next review: December 2024

Appendix 1: Practical tips for building a positive school culture & 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 absent.
- 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 councils.

Appendix 2: Record of Bullying Behaviour



1. Name of Student being bullied and Class Group

Name _____ Class _____

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

3. Source of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es))*

Student concerned	
Other Student	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other:	

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

School Grounds	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
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		Identity-based	
Other (specify)			

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

Homophobic	Disability/SEN-related	Racist	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 3: 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> ?	Yes
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	Yes
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	Yes
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?	Yes
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	Yes
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	Yes
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	Yes
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	Yes
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	Yes
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	Yes
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?	Yes
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	No
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	No
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	No
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?	Yes
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	No
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	No

Signed 
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date 12/12/2023

Signed 
Principal

Date 12/12/2023

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

To: PARENTS' COUNCIL

The Board of Management of DEANSEATH CC 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 12 DECEMBER 2023 [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 12/12/2023

Signed 
Principal

Date 12/12/2023

