St. Sinneach's National School
Roll No: 14672F

Colehill, Co. Longford

Anti-Bullying Policy

This policy is informed by Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying, Department of education, December 2022. This document refers to the UN Convention on the Right of the Child, ratified by Ireland in 1992, in which bullying is referred to as a 'children's rights issue'.

Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying is rooted in the following four key principles:

- Prevention: Through the generation of empathy and the provision of training which provides a foundation for knowledge, respect, equality and inclusion.

- Support: Tangible and targeted supports based on a continuum of needs which provide a framework for school communities to work together.

Oversight: Visible leadership creates positive environments for children and young people and all members of our school community.

Community: Building inclusive school communities that are connected to society, and that support and nurture positive relationships and partnerships.

Through the implementation of Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying, we can all work together towards a diverse, inclusive Irish society free from bullying in all its forms, where individual difference is valued, nurtured and celebrated and where all our children and young people can feel happy and safe in our schools.

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 - Continuous Professional Development, Liaise with N.E.P.S. and H.S.E. Psychologists, Use of resources from D.o.E. (Get Up Stand Up)

- 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 and its implementation in the school.

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'. 'Bullying is oppression, psychological or physical, of a less powerful person by a more powerful person or group of persons'. (Ken Rigby 1996).

Cineáltas defines bullying as targeted behaviour, online or offline, that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society.

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:
- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying (manipulating relationships as a means of bullying, for example; Malicious gossip, Excluding from the group, Subtle forms may include being persistently followed at yard time, being stared at in class etc. Sarcasm, Spreading rumours, Breaking confidence, Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear, Aggressive or passive-aggressive non-verbal behaviour (the "look", silence, insincere laughter), The use of derogatory language; Name calling, Inference, Acting as the messenger between others; Inciting conflict, Using status over someone: e.g. an older pupil or a pupil in a more stable friendship group may hold more "power" over another pupil

- cyber-bullying and

- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, transphobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or additional 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 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 is regarded as bullying behaviour.

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying is dealt with in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.

Information on different types of bullying and the impact of bullying are outlined in Appendix 1.

The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows:
- Teacher on yard duty (if incident occurs on yard)

- Class Teacher
- Deputy Principal
- Principal

Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) used by the school are as follows:

School-wide Approach: A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community. Respect, welcome and kindness will be afforded to refugees, should they become members of our school community. Everything possible will be done to facilitate their settling in to our school community, support their well-being and progress their education.

- The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Pupils are provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.

- Whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develop an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it through prevention and intervention.

- Focussed continuous professional development on the theme of 'Bullying' for all teaching staff.

- School-wide awareness-raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s) / guardian(s) and the wider school community.

- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff are encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision also applies to monitoring pupils' use of communication technology within the school, as per our Acceptable Use Policy.

- The school's Anti-Bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parent(s) / guardian(s). They are given an explanatory leaflet (Appendix 6) as part of the enrolment pack for new pupils.

- Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It is made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying, they are not considered to be telling tales; rather, they are behaving responsibly. Pupils are made aware that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.:
  - Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
  - Hand a note up to class teacher with homework.
  - Leave a message in the office for the Principal.

- Get a parent(s) / guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.

■ Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.

■ Parents / Guardians are regularly reminded that they are welcome to contact the school at the earliest opportunity, if they suspect that their child is being bullied.

■ The development of an Acceptable Use Policy in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored.

Implementation of Curricula

■ S.P.H.E. curriculum	■ Circle Time, when possible
■ Stay Safe Programme	■ Classroom Discussions
■ Seminars on Bullying – provided by appropriate outside agencies	■ The practice of Mindfulness in classroom settings

Links to Other Policies

■ Code of Behaviour	■ Record-Keeping Policy
■ Acceptable Use Policy	■ Health and Safety Policy
■ S.P.H.E. Plan	■ Special Educational Needs Policy
■ Well-being Promotion Policy	■ Child Safeguarding Policy

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 outlined in **Appendix 2.** The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is set out in **Appendix 3.**

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. Potential Bullying danger spots / hot spots have been identified by the staff, i.e. the area near the galvanised railings, sheds, toilets, the area at the lower right-hand side of the walking track, out-of-school activities, i.e. on a bus. Staff are extra vigilant in supervision of the agreed potential Bullying danger spots and where groups of pupils are clustered. Pupils are also aware of these danger spots. Pupils are encouraged to be aware of Bullying and to inform staff of any suspicions and issues. In relation to the Acceptable Use Policy in the school, all Internet sessions are supervised by the class teacher. The school monitors pupils' Internet usage within school time.

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.

This policy has been made available to school personnel and will be published on our school website – colehillns.ie

A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and the patron if requested.

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 community.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 21st May, 2024.

Signed: _____ (Fr. Charlie Healy, Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: _____

Signed: _____ (Mrs. Bríd Glynn, Principal)

Date: _____ Date of next review: _____