



**Coláiste Muire**

College Road, Ennis, Co. Clare

## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY



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Coláiste Muire is an all-girls voluntary secondary school with a Catholic ethos under the trusteeship of CEIST (Catholic Education an Irish School's Trust).

### Mission Statement

Coláiste Muire is committed to developing a dynamic Christian school community which fosters spiritual and personal development. We strive for academic excellence and seek to nurture a sense of self-worth, while having a particular concern for the needs of the academically and socially disadvantaged.

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 Coláiste Muire 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. This policy should be read in conjunction with Cyber Bullying Policy and Cinealtas Action Plan on Bullying December 2023.

Our Anti-Bullying Policy in line with Cinealtas 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.

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:
3. In accordance with *the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools* and 'Cinealtas': Action Plan on Bullying - bullying is defined 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 core elements of the definition are further described below:

A. Targeted behaviour Bullying is deliberate, unwanted behaviour that causes harm to others, and where the child or young person displaying bullying behaviour knows that their behaviour is or will be perceived as harmful by the child or young person experiencing the behaviour. Bullying is not accidental or reckless behaviour. The harm can be physical (for example personal injury), damage to or loss of property), social (for example withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion) and/or emotional (for example low self-esteem, depression, anxiety) and can have a serious or long-term negative impact on the child or young person experiencing the bullying behaviour. If the repeated harm is real for the child or young person experiencing the behaviour but unintended by the other child or young person, this is not bullying but, importantly, must still be addressed under the school's code of behaviour.

B. Repeated behaviour Bullying takes the form of a systematic pattern of behaviour which is repeated over time. Single offline incidents of intentional negative behaviour involving an imbalance of power are not considered bullying, but must still be addressed under the school's code of behaviour. Posting a single harmful message /image/video online which is highly likely to be reposted or shared with others can however be seen as bullying behaviour.

C. Imbalance of power in incidents of bullying, the child or young person experiencing the bullying behaviour finds it difficult to defend themselves as a result of the abuse of a real or perceived imbalance of power. This imbalance of power may manifest itself through differences in size, strength, age, ability, peer group power, economics status, social status, religion, race, ethnic origin including membership of the Traveller and/or Roma communities, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender, gender identity, gender expression,

experience of the care system, disability or the receipt of special education. In incidents of online (or cyber) bullying, the imbalance of power may relate to online anonymity, technical proficiency and possession of information /images/video, and the inability of the targeted person to remove offensive online material or escape the bullying.

#### **4. Role of School Personnel**

The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows:

Any teacher may act as the relevant teacher if the circumstances warrant it. However, the investigation of incidents will normally be conducted by the Class Director and/or Year Head and/or one of the Deputy Principals.

- Any student or parent/guardian may bring a concern in relation to bullying to the attention of the school authorities. This can be done by completing a Bullying Report Form (Appendix 1) prior to meeting with the school authorities or by completing it with the help of the school authorities.
  - Every teacher and member of staff in the Coláiste Muire has a responsibility to intervene in any untoward behaviour between students.
  - Every teacher and member of staff in Coláiste Muire has a responsibility to report incidents of bullying witnessed by them on the relevant form to the Class Director/Year Head/Deputy Principal.
  - Class Directors should gather the Report Forms and collate the information revealed to them.
  - The Class Director and the Year Head will discuss the details of the reported Bullying incidents and decide on strategies to intervene and allay difficulties.
  - The Year Head will report on a regular basis the reported incidents of Bullying to the Year Heads Meeting.
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:
    - Students are encouraged to develop a positive sense of self-worth and self-esteem during their time in Coláiste Muire, through curricular and extra-curricular programmes and activities, Drama/Art, Annual Musical and Sports etc.
    - Anti-bullying Programmes and Initiatives (Appendix 5) strive to raise awareness of difficulties that can occur when there is bullying behaviour.
    - The school will create an atmosphere of respect and welcome.

- Procedures will be implemented to ensure that all students understand how to raise issues of inappropriate behaviour towards them or witnessed by them towards other students in the school.
- Procedures will be implemented to ensure that all staff members will understand their responsibilities in relation to bullying behaviour and how to deal with same.
- The atmosphere of the school should strive to foster an attitude of respect for all, to promote diversity, to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping and to highlight the unacceptable nature of bullying behaviour.
- Areas of the curriculum that provide opportunities to deal on a formal basis with the area of bullying include SPHE, CSPE, R.E., Wellbeing, Friends for Life Programme and Learning to Learn Programme.
- All programmes will take into account the needs of the SEN students.
- Anti-Bullying Awareness events will be organised annually among the full student body including Internet Safety and Cyber Bullying, Stand Up Awareness Week, Stamp Out Bullying, Social Empathy Programme and others.
- Assemblies with year groups will be held to increase awareness of bullying.
- Appropriate in-service will be arranged for staff on the area of bullying and its effects and the practical implementation on the school policy.

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*)

- The primary aim in investigating and dealing with Bullying is to resolve any issues and restore as far as practicable relationships of parties.
- If an incident of bullying is reported to any staff member or if any staff member observes an incident of bullying them must fill out the Bullying Report Form.
- The teacher passes this report onto the relevant Class Director/Year Head/Deputy Principal.
- The primary aim of the Class Director/Year Head/Deputy Principal 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 (rather than to apportion blame).
- The student will fill in a Student Statement Form (Appendix 2). The Class Director/Year Head/Deputy Principal will record statements from all parties including any witnesses. In investigating and dealing with bullying, the Class Director/Year Head/Deputy Principal will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved. The Class Director/Year Head/Deputy Principal should seek questions of what, when, who, why, where and how?

- If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first, taking a written account of the individual versions. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements.
- It is the responsibility of the Class Director/Year Head/Deputy Principal to inform the relevant Class Directors/Year Heads of the parties involved. It is essential that this is done confidentially.
- Where it has been determined that bullying has not occurred the Year Head will keep files on record. The Class Director will also review the situation.
- If it has been determined that bullying has occurred, the Class Director informs the Year Head. All files are passed on to the Year Head. The Year Head will contact the parents/guardian of the parties involved to inform them on the matter and explain the actions being taken. If the parents/guardian request to come in the Year Head will meet them. The Class Director will attend the meeting.
- The Class Director/Year Head refers the case to the Student Support Team for support for all the parties involved,
- The Class Director/Year Head reviews the situation. If he/she determines that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately addressed within 20 school days after he/she determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded by the Class Director/Year Head on the Bullying Review Form (Appendix 3) as directed by the Department of Education.
- The Class Director/Year Head passes this Bullying Review Form onto the Principal. Sanctions are imposed as in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.
- In very serious cases of bullying or at the Class Directors/Year Heads discretion the incident will be referred directly to the Deputy Principal/Principal.

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

- The Guidance Team/Counsellor/ Class Director/Year Head will refer the case to the guidance team for support of the parties involved.
- Student Support Team — will also be involved for extra support.
- The Class Directors and Year Heads will provide support for all parties.
- Those who have been found to have engaged in bullying will be encouraged to recognise the inappropriateness of such behaviour and the seriousness of its effects on others.
- Further intervention may be deemed appropriate when instances of bullying occur. This may involve counselling by outside professionals (e.g. NEPS;

CAMHS; NEWB) The objective of such intervention will be the restoration of confidence and self-esteem in both perpetrator and victim.

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.

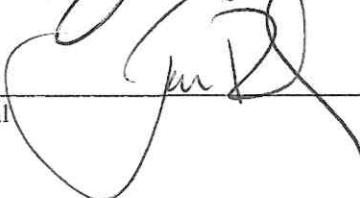
10. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department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

11. 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.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2024 (Date)

Signed   
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date 26<sup>th</sup> June 2024

Signed   
Principal

Date 26<sup>th</sup> June 2024

**Appendix 1 - Template for Bullying Report Form**

Name of person making the report	
Date	
Description of what happened & list of evidence of bullying if any	
Where/Location	
When	
Repeated incident	Yes      No
Name(s) of those involved	
Witnesses/bystanders to the incidents	
Actions to be taken	

**Appendix 2 - Template for Student Statement Form**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date(s) and location of the incident: \_\_\_\_\_

Who was involved in the incident?


How where you involved?


Any other relevant details?


Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix 3: Template for recording bullying behaviour**

**Bullying Review Form**

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

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


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

Pupil concerned	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Pupil	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent/Guardian	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

School Grounds	<input type="checkbox"/>
Classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corridor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Toilets	<input type="checkbox"/>
School Bus	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

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6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es))

Physical Aggression	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cyber-bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>
Damage to Property	<input type="checkbox"/>	Intimidation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Isolation/Exclusion	<input type="checkbox"/>	Malicious Gossip	<input type="checkbox"/>
Name Calling	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

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 \_\_\_\_\_



**Appendix 4 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

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

To: Parents Association  
 The Board of Management of St. Michael's 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 26<sup>th</sup> June 2024 [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 [Signature]  
 Chairperson, Board of Management

Date 26<sup>th</sup> June 2024

Signed [Signature]  
 Principal

Date 26<sup>th</sup> June 2024

Signed [Signature]  
 Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed [Signature]  
 Principal

Date 26/6/2024

Date 26/6/2024

**Appendix 5 – Anti-bullying Policy**

<b>Proactive and Anti-bullying awareness programmes offered within the school community.</b>	
<b>Friends for Life</b>	FRIENDS for Life empowers participants to cope with the emotions of themselves and others by engaging with positive thoughts, emotions, and self-regulation strategies. The program also teaches creative alternatives to solving problems they would have previously shied away from, fostering the development of confidence and self-esteem.
<b>Working Things Out Positive Mental Health Workshop.</b>	As part of its work with the Elevate Foundation, Clarecare has been delivering the 'Working Things Out' positive mental health workshop to young people in secondary schools, primary schools, and youth reach centres across Co. Clare since 2018. Developed in Ireland by the Parents Plus organisation, <a href="http://www.parentplus.ie">www.parentplus.ie</a> , 'Working Things Out' is an evidence-based programme for adolescents aged 11-16 years of age to promote positive mental health and teach coping strategies to overcome specific problems.
<b>Get Up Stand Up</b>	Get Up, Stand Up, is seven session social skills learning programme developed by NEPS for Young Adolescents. It covers themes such as 'Friendship', Learning to Solve Problems and 'Resilience and Coping'
<b>Fuse</b>	FUSE is the first research-based Anti-Bullying and Online Safety Programme designed to comply with UNESCO's Whole Education Approach to tackle bullying and online safety in schools. Coláiste Muire is piloting this programme with our 2 <sup>nd</sup> year cohort.
<b>Career Guidance Modules</b>	3 Bullying Modules <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resilience</li> <li>• Bystanders</li> <li>• Online Safety</li> </ul>

<b>Peer Helpers</b>	For many years Coláiste Muire has run a Peer Mentoring scheme. Leaving Cert students who have volunteered to participate in the programme meet with first year students on their first day in secondary school, Induction Day. They also meet with first years in small groups every second week during the first term. These Senior students and provide positive role models for first year students. They are available throughout the year to support, listen and direct for appropriate help if required.
<b>Social Empathy Programme</b>	Activating Social Empathy supports the aims of the Guidelines for Wellbeing in Junior Cycle to include learning opportunities to enhance the physical, mental, emotional, and social wellbeing of students' and help students to build life skills. The potential benefits of empathy education in schools include: More positive classroom climate & relationships Fewer disciplinary issues Reduced levels of bullying A more positive school culture Improved academic performance
<b>Headstrong programme Transition Year</b>	HEADSTRONG, a mental health and wellbeing programme designed by Cycle Against Suicide for secondary schools, aims to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stamp out stigma</li> <li>• Promote resilience</li> <li>• Encourage inclusivity</li> <li>• Enhance wellbeing</li> <li>• Empower student voice</li> </ul>
<b>Life skills for School — Aware Toni Knowles</b>	This TY programme is very effective in helping students to learn new ways of dealing with life and its challenges.
<b>Stand up Awareness Week</b>	A committee of students & teachers organise a number of events during the week to support the Wellbeing, inclusivity of our LGBTI+ community. This week empowers students to celebrate themselves & others and to stand up against any form of bullying.

<b>Internet Safety Day</b>	<p>Safer Internet Day (SID) is an EU wide initiative to promote a safer internet for all users, especially young people. It is promoted in Ireland by the PDST Technology in Education and Webwise.</p> <p>Presentations include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• News, Information, and the Problems of False Information. Managing Your Online Wellbeing</li> <li>• Respectful communication online</li> <li>• Self-esteem online - The Full Picture</li> </ul>
<p><b>Webwise</b></p> <p><b>Connect</b></p> <p><b>Lockers</b></p> <p><b>Be in Ctrl</b></p>	<p>Junior cycle Digital Media Literacy. A 6-week module enabling students to become digitally literate allowing them to be safer online.</p> <p>Lockers is an information and education resource; it assists schools in coping with and preventing the sharing of explicit self-generated images of minors. Intended for use with Junior Cycle SPHE classes.</p> <p>Be in Ctrl created in partnership with An Garda Siochana seeks to inform school leaders and teachers about the online sexual coercion and extortion of children and how a school can address this issue, in collaboration with students' parents. The resource contains three lessons to support schools as they address the issue in the context of the Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) programme.</p>
<b>Learning to Learn</b>	Resilience module
<b>Visiting Speakers</b>	<p>Garda Niamh O'Malley</p> <p>Dr Maureen Griffin</p> <p>Clare Haven</p>