

Cornamaddy N.S. - Anti-Bullying Policy

1. Introduction:

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 Cornamaddy 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.

2. Key Principles

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) 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;

(b) Effective leadership

(c) A school-wide approach

(d) A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact

(e) 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;

(f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils

(g) Supports for staff

(h) Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and

(i) On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

3. Definition

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.

4. Relevant Teachers in Cornamaddy N.S.

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

Principal, Deputy Principal and all teaching staff.

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

5. Education and Prevention Strategies:

The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:

Whole School Approach:

There will be a school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community. We will promote the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour. We will foster and enhance the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities.

We will raise awareness of bullying 5 times a year - September, November, January, Feb/Mar and Apr/May. Pupils will be made aware of what is bullying and the various forms that it can take and the possible effects/impacts on the victims of bullying. Children will be encouraged to reject bullying and report it when they witness it. An Anti Bullying Code will be developed and displayed in classrooms and corridors

Bullying questionnaires will be used in the school following these awareness-raising lessons.

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

Parents will be informed of the school policy on bullying and encouraged to look for signs of bullying. They are also informed how to contact the school if they have information or want to report bullying.

There will be supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors and school grounds. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school. We will encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'.

We will ensure that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.:

Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time/Get a parent or friend to tell on your behalf.

Curriculum/School Programmes

Bullying: SPHE, RSE, Stay Safe & Walk Tall programmes.

Cyber Bullying: Be Safe Be Web Wise, My Selfie. Talks by Barnardos/ Community Gardai

Links to Other School Policies

Code of Behaviour, Child Protection Policy, Supervision of Pupils, Acceptable Use Policy (ICT), Attendance Policy

6. Investigation, Follow-up and Recording of Bullying Behaviour.

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:

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 (rather than to apportion blame. (**Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2013**))

Reporting Bullying Behaviour:

Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.

All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.

Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;

Investigating Bullying

While 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;

Parent(s)/guardian(s) and pupils are required to co-operate 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;

Teachers will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.

Where possible, incidents will be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;

All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way;

When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher will seek answers to questions of What, Where, When, Who and Why. This will be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner;

If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved will be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member will 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 a group will be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after the interview by the teacher;

Parents of the parties involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken. The school will give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the pupils;

When It Has Been Determined That Bullying Has Taken Place:

Stage 1. Pupils who are alleged to have been involved in the bullying behaviour will be interviewed individually and may be (age dependant) asked to write an account of what occurred. The children will be aware that the interview and request of written accounts is to help find out what happened and not a presumption of guilt. If pupils have been found to have been involved in bullying, they will be asked to sign an agreement that they will stop this behaviour immediately and treat all pupils with respect. **Parents will be notified of this agreement.**

The first instances of bullying will be treated like this to enable the teacher to emphasise the policy of showing how damaging bullying is rather than moving to sanctions immediately. It may also facilitate the investigation if pupils are made aware when they are being interviewed that the policy is to resolve rather than punish.

The relevant teacher will complete a report at this first stage to indicate the findings of the investigation, the decision reached and the outcome of the teacher's intervention. A copy of the agreement with the pupils should be retained with this written report.

Stage 2: If the bullying behaviour continues and the pupils are found to have broken the agreement parents are invited to the school and informed of the investigations. Parents will be asked to countersign a new agreement. The pupils will be informed of the serious nature of their actions and that if this agreement is broken that sanctions may be imposed. The relevant teacher will record this meeting with the parents and retain a copy of the new agreement.

Stage 3: In the event of further bullying behaviour the parents will be invited to the school to meet with the principal and the relevant teacher with one of the following outcomes:

- A new strategy to end the bullying
- The Principal may impose a suspension on the pupil
- The matter may be referred to the BOM and the pupil may be expelled.

Recording Bullying Behaviour:

The relevant teacher must use the recording template (Appendix 3 - attached to this document) to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

a) in cases where he/she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred; and

b) Where the school has decided as part of its anti-bullying policy that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

The school should list behaviours that must be recorded and reported immediately to the principal. These should be in line with the school's code of behaviour.

When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal.

Established intervention strategies

- Teacher interviews with all pupils
- Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process
- Circle Time
- Restorative interviews

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

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

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 pupils affected by bullying or pupils involved in the bullying behaviour.

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. Ratification

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on Tuesday 25th March 2014
Updated - BoM 13th October 2015 following advise from PDST advisor (May 2015)

11. Publication

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. Review

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. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.