

Coole National School



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School Position on Bullying

The Coole NS school community believes that each pupil has a right to an education free from fear and intimidation. We believe that all members of the school community are entitled to a school environment, which is free from bullying and the fear of bullying. All members of the school community will be encouraged to support such an environment. All members of the school community will be made aware of their rights and responsibilities in relation to bullying.

The school regards bullying as a serious infringement of individual rights and a serious threat to the self-esteem and self-confidence of targeted pupil(s). Therefore, it will not tolerate bullying of any kind.

Every report of bullying is treated seriously and dealt with, having due regard for the well-being of the targeted pupil(s) and the perpetrator(s).

The immediate priority, should a bullying incident occur, is ending the bullying, (*thereby protecting the person(s) being targeted*) and resolving the issues and restoring the relationships involved insofar as is practicable using a “Reform, not Blame” approach.

All pupils are expected to contribute to the creation and maintenance of a safe environment in the school. On becoming aware of any bullying situation, in the school, involving members of the school community they should notify a trusted responsible adult. Bullying behaviour is too serious not to report.

Pupils’ participation in school life in general is encouraged through existing school structures. Awareness of bullying, and willingness to take action to prevent or stop it, is part of this participation.

Anti-bullying Policy

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 Coole National 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. The primary aim of the policy is to resolve any issues and restore relationships as far as is practicable.
3. The Board of Management recognizes 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;
 - 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

4. 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 behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- Physical aggression
- Intimidation
- Isolation/exclusion or other relational bullying
- Name calling
- Damage to property
- Extortion
- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
- cyber-bullying

- 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.

This definition includes a wide range of behaviour, whether verbal or written, whether physical or social, whether targeting person or property, whether carried out directly or indirectly or through any electronic or other medium, which could harm a pupil or undermine her/his self-esteem or self-confidence.

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

See Appendix 1 for examples of bullying behaviour

5. The member of staff who has responsibility for investigating and dealing with bullying is referred to as the ‘relevant teacher’. At Primary level the relevant teacher will normally be the class teacher. (see section 6.8 of the Antibullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools). (Refer to section 6.8.3 and 6.8.4 in the Procedures.

The primary aim for the relevant teacher 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 “Relevant Teacher(s)” in Coole N.S are the following, depending on the situation:

- Class teacher
- Teacher who witnesses the incident
- The class teacher in consultation with the Principal or Deputy Principal.

6. The education and prevention strategies that will be used by the school are as follows: (see section 6.5 of the Antibullying procedures for Primary and Post Primary schools).
 - The anti-bullying module of the SPHE program, including Stay Safe Program, as it applies during each school year
 - The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extra-curricular activities.
 - Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities. All staff, including non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and to report issues or concerns to the relevant teacher(s)
 - Continued implementation of the Buddy System between infants and senior classes.
 - An anti bullying pupil committee has been set up in June 2024. This consist of pupils from the senior classes (3rd to 6th class). Their role will be to give feedback to the school leadership team

regularly throughout the school year. The voice of the pupils is an important factor in tackling bullying. The committee will engage with their class and discuss reports from meetings.

- Weekly Wow assemblies where children are recognised for kindness and being a good friend.
- This anti-bullying policy will be discussed with children and parents/guardians each year and will be posted on the school's website.
- Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the role of bystanders. In that way, pupils will gain confidence in telling which is of vital importance. Children will be informed that when they report an incidence of bullying, they are not telling tales, but acting responsibly. Children will be encouraged to tell by:
 - Directly approaching a teacher after class
 - Handing up a note
 - Asking a parent to speak on their behalf
 - Clear instructions re “who to tell”, “how to tell” and “when to expect”
- Encourage communication between parents and the school.
- Staff are encouraged to maintain professional development 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-prevention and intervention. Professional development includes workshops on cyberbullying and bullying for teachers.
- **Friendship Week during the third week of September and Anti-Bullying Week during the third week in January** - a number of awareness-raising exercises for each class group, proactively explaining the nature and variety, causes, consequences and unacceptability of bullying.
 - Pupils are helped to examine the issue of bullying in a calm rational way, outside of the tense context of particular bullying incidents. In the process they are made more aware of the nature of bullying and the various forms that it can take.
 - Pupils are made aware that the consequences of bullying behaviour are always bad for those who are targeted, even if this is not always obvious at the time.
 - Pupils are encouraged to recognise, reject and report bullying behaviour.
 - The Anti-bullying policy to be included in the information pack issued to parents of incoming students.
 - Guest speakers for parents, students and staff(CPD)
 - Display anti-bullying/friendship posters/messages throughout the school
 - Positive Rewards system

7. Procedures for investigation of bullying.

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:

Step 1

- The 'Relevant Teacher' investigates all instances of reported or suspected bullying behaviour, within the school, with a view to establishing the facts and bringing any such behaviour to an end.

Step 2

- If deemed necessary by the relevant teacher the School, through the reserves the right to ask any pupil to write an account of what happened, as part of an investigation. This will be a standard procedure and does not necessarily imply that a pupil is guilty of misbehaviour.

Step 3

- Pupils who are alleged to have been involved in bullying behaviour are interviewed by the 'Relevant Teacher' to establish the nature and extent of the behaviour and any reasons for it. In the event that they have been involved in bullying behaviour they are asked to sign a binding promise that they will treat all pupils fairly, equally and respectfully including the targeted pupil(s).

Step 4

- The 'Relevant Teacher' does not apportion blame but rather treats bullying behaviour as a "mistake" that can and must be remedied. S/he emphasises that the intention is not to punish perpetra-

tors but to talk to them, to explain how harmful and hurtful bullying is and to seek a promise that it will stop. If that promise is forthcoming and is honoured there will be no penalty and that will be the end of the matter. Pupils who report bullying therefore are not getting others "in trouble" so much as enabling them to get out of trouble into which they may ultimately get if the bullying continued.

Step 5

- If a pupil has signed such a promise but then chooses to break that promise and continue the bullying behaviour, this can then no longer be considered a "mistake." In this event parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed and requested to countersign their daughter/son's promise. Breach of this additional promise by further bullying behaviour is regarded as a very grave matter and a serious sanction may be imposed by the school authorities (See sanctions below).

Step 6

- All documentation regarding bullying incidents and their resolution is retained in the school.

Sanctions:

Where a pupil has been found to be engaged in bullying behaviour, has formally promised to stop and has broken that promise, any of the following sanctions may be imposed:

- S/he may be required to sign another promise, this time countersigned by a parent/guardian;
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) may be contacted by the 'Relevant Teacher' and informed of the nature and extent of the bullying behaviour with a view to agreeing a strategy whereby a promise to end the bullying behaviour would be honoured;
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) may be invited to a meeting with the 'Relevant Teacher' and the Principal and the pupil may be suspended from school.
- The case may be referred to the Board of Management and the pupil may be expelled from the school.

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

Bullied pupils:

- Ending the bullying behaviour,
- Reinforcing the school culture to foster more respect for bullied pupils and all pupils,
- Reinforcing the culture of telling when an incident happens
- Group work and Circle Time
- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the speedy identification of those responsible and speedy resolution of bullying situations,
- Helping bullied pupils raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school).

Bullying pupils:

- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are not blamed or punished and get a "clean sheet,"
- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are doing the right and honorable thing and giving them praise for this,
- Helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school),
- Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils' feelings of self-worth,
- In dealing with negative behaviour in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child,

- In dealing with bullying behaviour seeking resolution and offering a fresh start with a “clean sheet” and no blame in return for keeping a promise to reform.

Parental Support: What parents can do to help their child cope during a bullying incident?

- It is not advisable to advocate hitting back
- Teach them some coping strategies
- Encourage them to tell
- Stay with friends – avoid bullies
- Avoid provoking a bully
- Encourage assertiveness and not aggression
- Save any abusive phone, online or multimedia message and report them to the Garda
- What should a parent do if they know that their son/daughter is being bullied?
- Assure them that it is not their fault and that you will help them sort it out
- Contact the school – arrange an appointment with the relevant teacher
- Prepare for that meeting – bring notes and details of the events from your child’s point of view
- Ask that the incident be investigated and what supports the school can offer your child
- Work with the school to develop a strategy to deal with the problem

9. Implementation of curricula

- The full implementation of the SPHE curriculum and the Stay Safe Programmes. Resources include RSE, Walk Tall and Welcome to Wellbeing / Weaving Well-being •Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on Cyber Bullying, Fuse anti-bullying programme for 4th 5th and 6th class Web wise HTML heroes for 1st 2nd & 3rd class Web wise Primary teachers’ resources.
- Visits for the Community liaison Garda. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardaí, cover issues around personal safety and cyberbullying.
- The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.
- Weaving well-being has been introduced as part of our school improvement plan from Junior infants to 6th class.
- Talk for Parents, children and staff on the dangers of Social Media by Zeeko or Cyber safe schools

10. 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.

11. The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps as 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 reviewed policy was adopted by the Board of Management on the 18/6/2024

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 to the Department of Education and Skills and to the patron if requested.

Chairperson: *Helene Ougley*

Date: 18/6/2024

Principal: *Lisa Doyle*

Date: 18/6/2024

Appendix 1

Examples of bullying behaviours:

<p>General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. Sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc. • Physical aggression • Damage to property • Name calling • Slagging • The production of, display of or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person • Offensive graffiti • Extortion • Intimidation • Insulting or offensive gestures • The “look” • Invasion of personal space • A combination of any of the types listed.
<p>Verbal</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name-calling • Jeering • Teasing • Taunting • Slagging • Threatening
<p>Physical</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hitting • Spitting • Kicking • Pushing • Tripping • Stealing • Vandalising/ damaging property • Intimidating
<p>Psychological</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excluding • Isolating • Ridiculing • Spreading rumours • Passing notes • Using peer pressure to intimidate • Threatening gestures or looks.
<p>Cyber</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denigration: Spreading rumours, lies or gossip to hurt a person’s reputation • Harassment: Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual • Impersonation: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person’s name • Flaming: Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight • Trickery: Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outing: Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images • Exclusion: Purposefully excluding someone from an online group • Cyber stalking: Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety • Silent telephone/mobile phone call • Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls • Abusive text messages • Abusive email • Abusive communication on social media networks • Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures • Abusive posts on any form of communication technology
<p>Identity based behaviours</p> <p>Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in equality.</p> <p>Legislation (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the traveller community).</p>	
Homophobic and Transgender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation • Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation • Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian...used in a derogatory manner • Physical intimidation or attacks • Threats
Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background • Exclusion based on any of the above
Relational	<p>This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malicious gossip • Isolation & exclusion • Ignoring • Excluding from the group • Taking someone's friends away • "Bitching" • Spreading rumours • Breaking confidence • Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear • The "look" • Use or terminology such as 'nerd' in a derogatory way
Sexual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching • Harassment
Special Educational Needs, Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name calling • Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs • Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to rec-

ognise and defend themselves against bullying

- Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues.
- Mimicking a person's disability
- Setting others up for ridicule

Appendix 2

Coole N.S. Template for recording bullying behaviour

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

<u>Name:</u>	<u>Class:</u>
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2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

<u>Name:</u>	<u>Class:</u>

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

Pupil concerned	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

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

Playground Please include specific area	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	

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		Other (specify)	

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

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller	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: _____

* **Note:** The categories listed in the tables 3, 4 & 6 are suggested, and schools may add to or amend these to suit their own circumstances.