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**Cushinstown N.S. Anti-Bullying Policy.**

**School Position on Bullying (Anti-Bullying Statement)**

Cushinstown NS believes that each pupil has a right to an education free from fear and intimidation.

The school regards bullying as a serious infringement of individual rights and a serious threat to the self-esteem and self-confidence of targeted pupils. Therefore it does 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 pupils and the perpetrators.

The immediate priority, should a bullying incident occur, is ending the bullying and resolving the issues and restoring the relationships involved insofar as is practicable.

All the children are expected to contribute to the creation and maintenance of a safe environment in the school. On becoming aware of any bullying situation, in or outside 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 Cushinstown NS 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 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;
* 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

**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 conduct 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:

- 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.

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.

Appendix 1 gives a list of specific examples of bullying behaviour. This list is not exhaustive.

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.**  As this is a primary school the teacher investigating and dealing with child to child bullying in Cushinstown NS will normally be the class teacher. (Procedures 6.8.3) although the principal may sometimes investigate if judged appropriate.

The Principal and Deputy Principal will be available for consultation when required.

**5.**  The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity based bullying) used by the school are as follows:

* The anti-bullying module of the SPHE program Stay Safe and the Walk Tall program
* Safer Internet Day celebrated annually
* Anti Bullying Week/Friendship Week
* Awareness raising exercises will take place through SPHE lessons and regular school assemblies, pro-actively 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.
* Through presentations or other exercises, the school staff and parents/guardians are made aware of the nature of bullying and the signs that might indicate that a pupil is being bullied. They are encouraged to be vigilant in watching out for signs of bullying and to report any suspicion of bullying they may have to the “Relevant Teacher” (in the case of staff members) or any staff member (in the case of parents/guardians).

**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:

**(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 is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved- rather than to apportion blame.

**(ii)** In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;

**(iii)** All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the teacher whether they take place within the school or outside it. In this way, pupils will gain confidence in ‘telling’. This confidence factor is of vital importance. Pupils will be made aware that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.

**(iv)** If an unwanted behaviour is reported, a teacher will speak to both parties and any witnesses to establish the facts insofar as possible. If the school rules are found to have been broken, then the incident will then be dealt with in accordance with the school’s code of behaviour. The pupil(s) will be reminded of the school rules and educated on how to behave correctly.

**(v)** If an unwanted behaviour is reported, and it is reported as meeting the criteria of bullying (deliberate, repeated aggression), then the behaviour will be investigated by the Relevant Teacher. The principal may support the Relevant Teacher if he deems it appropriate.

**(vi)** The Relevant Teacher will interview the various parties and witnesses to establish the facts insofar as possible. Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved. All interviews should 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. Pupils may be asked to write an account of their behaviour (Pupil’s Account of Incident - see Appendix 3). This is a standard procedure and does not necessarily imply that a pupil is guilty of misbehaviour.

**(vii)** If the investigation establishes that the incident meets the criteria for bullying (deliberate, repeated aggression), and the pupils involved in the bullying behaviour accept that they have broken the school rules and would like to make amends for their behaviour, then the Relevant Teacher will treat the incident as a mistake.\* The pupil will be asked to sign an Anti-Bullying Pledge(Appendix 2) that they will treat all pupils fairly, equally and respectfully including the targeted pupil(s)

**(viii)** The Relevant Teacher will explain how harmful and hurtful bullying is, educate about correct behaviour, and seek an undertaking that it will stop. If that undertaking is forthcoming and is honoured there will be no penalty and that will be the end of the matter. Parents of the children engaged in the bullying behaviour may be informed by the Relevant Teacher that their children made a mistake and that they have given an undertaking that it will stop. The parents of the child being bullied may also be informed by the Relevant Teacher of the school’s actions.

**(ix)** The Relevant Teacher will fill out the Investigation Report (Appendix 4) to include the findings of the investigation, the strategy adopted and the actions taken and submit it to the principal. The principal will then fill out the template for recording bullying behaviour and file it in the anti-bullying folder.

**(x)** If a pupil who has given an undertaking but then chooses to break that undertaking and continue the bullying behaviour within 20 school days, this can then no longer be considered a ‘mistake.’ In this event parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed. Further bullying behaviour is regarded as a very grave matter and a serious sanction may be imposed by the school authorities (see sanctions below).The parents of the bullied child will also be informed. A meeting will be arranged for the relevant teacher and principal/deputy principal to speak to the parents of the bullied child and the school's programme for supporting pupils who have been bullied will also be discussed. A plan of action will be decided.

\* If the investigation establishes that the incident met the criteria for bullying (deliberate, repeated aggression), but the pupil(s) involved in the bullying behaviour do not accept that they have broken the school rules and are unwilling to make amends for their behaviour, then the Relevant Teacher will meet with their parents and the principal.

* All documentation regarding bullying incidents and their resolution is retained securely in the school via the Aladdin platform.

**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.

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

* **Bullied pupils:**

- Ending the bullying behaviour,

- Changing the school culture to foster more respect for bullied pupils and all pupils,

- Continue to work on a school culture to foster greater empathy towards and support for bullied pupils,

- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the awareness-raising programme,

- 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,

- Making adequate counselling facilities available to pupils who need it in a timely manner,

- 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).

- Implementing a “buddy system” in school. This can be done discreetly.

* **Bullying pupils:**

- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are not blamed or punished.

- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are doing the right and honourable 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.

**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.** 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.

**10.** This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on **08/10/2024**

**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 of Education and Skills and to the patron if requested. All parents/guardians of children being inducted into the school are made aware of the anti bullying policy. Parents are asked to sign that they are aware of all school policies and support the staff in their efforts to provide a positive learning experience for the children in the school

**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. 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.

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

(Chairperson of Board of Management) (Principal)

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

Date of next review: September 2025

**Appendix 1**

***Bullying can take a number of forms. These may include any of the following (this list is not exhaustive):***

* **Repeated aggressive behaviour/attitude/body language, for example:**

Shouting and uncontrolled anger,

Personal insults,

Verbal abuse,

Offensive language directed at an individual,

Continually shouting or dismissing others,

Public verbal attacks/criticism,

Domineering behaviour,

Open aggression,

Offensive gestures and unwanted physical contact.

* **Intimidation, either physical, psychological or emotional, for example:**

Treating in a dictatorial manner,

Ridicule,

Persistent slagging,

Deliberate staring with the intent to discomfort.

Persistent rudeness in behaviour and attitude toward a particular individual.

Asking inappropriate questions/making inappropriate comments re. personal life/family

Asking inappropriate questions/making inappropriate comments re. social life or schoolwork.

* **Interference with property, for example:**

Stealing/damaging books or equipment

Stealing/damaging clothing or other property

Demanding money with menace

Persistently moving, hiding or interfering with property

Marking/defacing property

* **Undermining/Public or Private Humiliation, for example:**

Condescending tone,

Deliberately withholding significant information and resources,

Writing of anonymous notes,

Malicious, disparaging or demeaning comments,

Malicious tricks/derogatory jokes,

Knowingly spreading rumours,

Belittling others’ efforts, their enthusiasm or their new ideas,

Derogatory or offensive nicknames (name-calling),

Using electronic or other media for any of the above (cyber bullying),

Disrespectfully mimicking a particular individual in his/her absence,

Deliberately refusing to address issues focusing instead on the person.

* **Ostracising or isolating, for example:**

Deliberately marginalising an individual

Deliberately preventing a person from joining a group,

Deliberately preventing from joining in an activity, schoolwork-related or recreational

Blaming a pupil for things s/he did not do.

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**Anti-Bullying Pledge**

Cushinstown NS believes that every member of the school community has a right to work and learn in a safe, comfortable and positive environment. Every member of our school community (staff, students, parents/guardians) has a responsibility to maintain a positive atmosphere within the school and to play their part in dealing with bullying when it occurs.

**Bullying will not be tolerated in Cushinstown NS**

As a student of Cushinstown NS, it is my duty to play my part in trying to make my school a place where everyone can feel safe from bullying. I also want my school to be a safe and positive place to learn.

I, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (student name) promise:

* To treat all students and staff with respect and kindness
* To call fellow students by their preferred name only
* To avoid aggressive or offensive behaviour such as name-calling, giving dirty looks, sneering, pushing or making unwanted physical contact…etc.
* To refrain from telling lies, starting rumours, or repeating gossip about others
* To refrain from cyber-bullying (which includes abusive anonymous telephone calls, the internet, social networking, text messages, camera phones and certain apps such as Snapchat…etc.)
* To refrain from isolating other students
* Never to retaliate but to report the incident
* To report any incident of bullying behaviour that I may witness
* To make new students feel welcome and to be helpful to them

Student Signature : \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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

**Appendix 3**

**Pupil’s Account of Incident**

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**Pupils Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Relevant Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**APPENDIX 4- Template for reporting Bullying behaviour**

**Cushinstown N.S. Anti Bullying Policy**

**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))\*** |  |  | **4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))\*** |  |  |
|  |  |  | **Playground** |  |  |
| **Other Pupil** |  |  | **Classroom** |  |  |
| **Parent** |  |  | **Corridor** |  |  |
| **Teacher** |  |  | **Toilets** |  |  |
| **Other** |  |  | **School Bus** |  |  |
|  |  |  | **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** |  | **Other (specify)** |  |

**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 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**