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 Scoil Cholmcille 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) 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 which

- Supports a school culture and climate that celebrates difference;

- Strives to engender and ethos under which bullying is unacceptable;

- Is fair, firm, clear and consistent in disciplinary measures;

(c) A school-wide approach which

- Assists in countering bullying behaviour in schools;

- Encompasses a high degree of school-wide vigilance and openness thus ensuring that bullying behaviour can be adequately tackled;

- Promotes the home/school/community link as part of the school's effective operation;

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

- The definition of bullying, the various types of bullying behaviour and the impacts of bullying is communicated and explained to the school community;

(e) Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that

- Build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils;

- Explicitly address the issues of school yard and classroom bullying along with 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 which

- Facilitates early intervention;

(g) Supports for staff

- All members of the school community are familiar with the school's anti-bullying policy enabling them to effectively and consistently apply the policy when required;

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

- Is essential to effective practice;

- Outlines the "relevant teacher' when investigating and dealing with bullying;

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

- The anti-bullying policy is subject to continuous review.

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 conducted, by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is <u>repeated over time</u>.

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.

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

Examples of bullying behaviours

General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying	• Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community). • Physical aggression • Damage to property • Name calling • Slagging • The production, display 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.
Cyber	• **Denigration**: Spreading rumors, 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 • **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 posts on any form of communication technology

Identity Based Behaviours
Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation

Homophobic and Transgender	• 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	● Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background ● Exclusion on the basis of any of the above
Relational	This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include: ● 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	● Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching ● Harassment
Special Educational Needs, Disability	● Name calling ● Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs ● Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise 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

4. The **relevant teacher**(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows:
- The Class teacher initially
- The Principal thereafter if necessary

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

5. 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:

School-wide approach
- A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.
- The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.

- The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Pupils will be 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 develops an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it- prevention and intervention.
- An annual audit of professional development needs with a view to assessing staff requirements through internal staff knowledge/expertise and external sources
- Professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teacher(s)
- 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 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.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parent(s)/guardian(s) s are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school (every year).
- The implementation of regular (e.g. per year/per term/per month/per week) whole school awareness measures e.g. a dedicated notice board in the school and classrooms on the promotion of friendship, and bullying prevention; annual Friendship Week.
- 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 should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.:
    - Direct approach to the teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
    - Hand note up with homework.
    - Make a phone call to the school or to a trusted teacher in the school.
    - Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
    - Administer a confidential questionnaire once a term to all pupils.
    - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Identify clear protocols to encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied. The protocol should be developed in consultation with parents.
- 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. The Mobile Phone and Electronic Devices Policy outlines the school wide ban on devices with a camera.

Implementation of curricula
- The full implementation of the SPHE curriculum and the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes, e.g. Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme.
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes at primary level. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardaí, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying
- 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.

● The school will implement the advice in "Sexual Orientation advice for schools" (RSE Primary, see booklet).

Links to other policies
● Code of Behaviour, Child Safeguarding Statement, Supervision of pupils, Acceptable Use policy, Attendance, Sporting activities.

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:

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);

The school's procedures must be consistent with the following approach.
Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s)) understand this approach from the outset.

1. Reporting bullying behaviour
● Pupils are encouraged to report bullying behaviour as soon as possible.
● 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), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;

2. Investigating and dealing with incidents:
● In 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 should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.
● Where possible incidents should be 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.
● When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This should 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 should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should 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 should be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after the interview by the teacher.

It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s). See Discipline Form. This form is a confidential document between student and teacher.

● In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy). The school should give parent(s)/guardian(s) 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.

● Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.

● It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parent(s)/guardian(s)) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school.

● Malicious complaints, which have no basis and are intended to impugn the integrity of another pupil/teacher are considered a very serious matter and may be treated under the disciplinary procedure and may lead to disciplinary action up to and including suspension. A complaint that is not upheld by the formal investigation is not necessarily considered to be malicious.

The following steps are taken in dealing with bullying behaviour:

Where a complaint is upheld, a meeting with the pupil's parents/guardians may take place. Any disciplinary action to be taken will be in line with the school's disciplinary policy. This may include suspension and in extreme cases expulsion. Records of any warnings for bullying remain in the pupil's file in accordance with the school's disciplinary procedures.

Regular checks will be made by the teacher, principal or chairperson investigating the complaint to ensure that the bullying behaviour has stopped and there is no victimisation. Retaliation of any kind against a pupil/teacher for complaining or taking part in an investigation concerning bullying is a serious matter and will be subject to disciplinary action.

A pupil may also be asked to apologise to the person/pupil they were bullying.

<u>**3. Follow up and recording**</u>
● In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:
  - Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
  - Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
  - Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable;
  - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardian(s) s or the school Principal or Deputy Principal.

● Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.

● Where a parent(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must be referred, as

appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures. An appeal may be made to the Chairperson of the Board of Management or their nominated deputy within ten school days setting out the reasons for the appeal. The appeal will be heard by an appropriate person as nominated by the Chairperson and will be based on a review of the written grounds of appeal and the investigation report, considering any issues of process raised only.
● In the event that a parent(s)/guardian(s) has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

4. Recording of bullying behaviour

It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner.

The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

Informal- pre-determination that bullying has occurred

● All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. Consideration needs to be given to where the records will be made e.g. incident book. All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher
● While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher must keep a written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same

The relevant teacher must inform the principal of all incidents being investigated.

Formal Stage 1-determination that bullying has occurred

● If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

Formal Stage 2-Appendix 3 (From DES Procedures)

The relevant teacher must use the recording template at **Appendix 3** 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.

When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal. These records will be kept in a locked filing cabinet.

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
● Working with parent(s)/guardian(s)s to support school interventions
● No Blame Approach

- Circle Time
- Restorative interviews
- Implementing sociogram questionnaires

Bullying as part of a continuum of behaviour
Bullying behaviour can be part of a continuum of behaviour rather than a stand-alone issue and in some cases behaviour can escalate beyond that which can be described as bullying to serious physical or sexual assault or harassment. In cases where Scoil Cholmcille has serious concerns in relation to managing the behaviour of a pupil, the advice of National Education Psychological Service (NEPS) will be sought.

Serious instances of bullying behaviour will be referred to the HSE Children and Family Services and/or Gardaí as appropriate.

7. The school's **programme of suppor**t 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.
     - Changing the 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 resolutions 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).
   - **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 honourable thing and giving them praise for this.
     - Making adequate counselling facilities available to help those who need it learn other ways of meeting their needs besides violating the rights of others.
     - 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. 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 was adopted by the Board of Management in _____.

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 and the patron if requested.

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, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: _____   Signed: _____
      (Chairperson of Board of Management)   (Principal)

Date: _____   Date: _____

Date of next review: September 2023

Appendix 3 Template for recording bullying behaviour

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	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

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

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
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

9.   Details of actions taken

Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher)   Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

Scoil Cholmcille
Mount Hanover
Duleek
Co. Meath
mounthanoverns@gmail.com
041-9839405

My name is _____

Date: _____

I think this is what happened:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Do you think you could have done anything differently?

Yes   No

Name: _____

Date: _____

This is what I think I should have done:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Signed (pupil):   _____

Date: _____