SCOIL DARA :   ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

1. This policy is related to and derives its values from the characteristic spirit / ethos of the school as expressed in the School's Mission Statement and the CEIST Charter.

2. **MISSION STATEMENT**
    Scoil Dara promotes the development of a community of faith inspired by Gospel values. The community of the school works in a holistic manner to ensure that dependence is gradually replaced by responsibility for self, society and the world. The dignity of each student, staff member and parent is honoured and reflected in school policies and structures. While educational excellence is promoted, it is the needs of the learner that direct the development of the school. We engage with alternative approaches to education especially for those who are most disadvantaged. The school promotes a spirit of service and care.

3. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2003 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of Scoil Dara 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 by the Department of Education and Skills in September 2013.

4. 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:

❖ Having a positive school culture and climate which -
  o is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity
  o encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
  o 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
  o build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
  o explicitly addresses 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

5. 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 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 once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and will 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 are set out in Appendix 1 of this document.

6. **Investigating and Dealing with Bullying.**

All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the member of teaching staff who has responsibility for investigating and dealing with bullying and will be referred to in this policy as 'the relevant teacher'

'The relevant teacher' will be a teacher with assistant principal post of responsibility or programme coordinator post of responsibility. In certain

instances, the deputy principal or principal may investigate and deal with bullying behaviour.

7. Education and Prevention Strategies

The prevention of bullying will be an integral part of the school's anti-bullying policy.

The school will have prevention and awareness raising measures across all aspects of bullying and will have strategies to engage pupils in addressing problems when they arise. Among the aims of such strategies will be to build empathy, respect and resilience in students.

The school will, through curricular and extra-curricular programmes, provide students with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth.

Initiatives and programmes focused on developing students' awareness and understanding of bullying, including its causes and effects, will deal explicitly with the issue of identity- based bullying and in particular homophobic and transphobic bullying. Appendix 2 of this policy provides more information on some of the means by which this will be undertaken.

A student or parent may bring a bullying concern to any teacher in the school. This teacher will ensure that the complaint is brought to the attention of the relevant teacher.

Prevention and awareness raising measures will also deal explicitly with cyberbullying, recognising that the best way to address cyber-bullying is to prevent it happening in the first place. Like all aspects of anti-bullying, the school's efforts will be school wide and will focus on educating students how to stay safe while on-line and to develop a culture of reporting any concerns about cyber-bullying. Parents will be particularly engaged in this dimension and at least one public event for parents will hosted by the school or Parents Council annually.

The particular needs of students with disabilities or with SEN will be taken into account in devising and implementing the school's programmes and strategies. The school's approach to decreasing the likelihood of bullying for students with SEN or disabilities will include improving inclusion, focusing on developing social skills, and cultivating a good school culture which has respect for all and helping one another as central values.

The school recognises that there is space within the teaching of all subjects to foster an attitude of respect for all: to promote the value of diversity; to address prejudice and stereotyping and to highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour. All teachers will be asked to avail of the opportunity within their subject to foster an attitude of respect for all. All subject departments will be asked to include the fostering of respect for all in their subject plan.

8. **Procedures for Investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies use for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are:**

Every report of bullying behaviour which the person reporting wants investigated Should ideally be written down, preferably, on the school's form 'Complaint of

Alleged Bullying Behaviour' but will be accepted in any written format.

Generally, each assistant principal who is a year head will take responsibility for investigations within his / her year group. The programme coordinator will take responsibility for transition year. An assistant principal can, by mutual agreement, have an investigation of a report relating to his / her year group investigated and dealt with by another assistant principal or the programme coordinator.

All teaching staff, and non-teaching staff of the school are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;

The primary aim of 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);

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;

Parents 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;

It will be made clear to all students that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.

Those involved in the report being investigated or witnesses may be asked to write their account of the incident(s);

In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved will be contacted at any early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to school policy). 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 for their pupils;

It will be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school;

The schools' code of behaviour provides a range of sanctions which can be imposed where the serious issue of bullying has been determined to have taken place.

In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he / she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded by the relevant teacher in the recording template at Appendix 3 of this document.

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; and
- any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal

Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents must be referred, as appropriate to the school's complaints procedures;

In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

All records involving investigations of bullying behaviour will be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation.

The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour will adhere to the following:

- while all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher will use his / her professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same;

- 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

- 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 in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

In each of the circumstances at (a) and (b) above, the recording template at Appendix 3 must be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable. It should also be noted that the timeline for recording bullying behaviour in the recording template at Appendix 3 does not in any way preclude the relevant teacher from consulting the Principal or Deputy Principal at an earlier stage in relation to a case.

The relevant teacher investigating alleged bullying behaviour can, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour, make a referral to relevant external agencies and authorities where appropriate.

Teachers will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying reported by students, staff or parents.

To ensure the privacy of all concerned, incidents will generally be investigated outside the classroom situation.

All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned.

The intervention methods used by the relevant teacher will be one of the following or a blend of more than one of the following:

> The traditional disciplinary approach
> Strengthening the victim
> Mediation
> Restorative Practice
> The Support Group Method
> The Method of Shared Concern

Initial training and continuous professional development will be provided to the relevant teachers in the above methods and any related new intervention methods that may emerge.

9. Supports for pupils affected by bullying

Among the supports and interventions which the school will have in place for students affected by bullying will be:
- support from school guidance counsellor
- support from year head
- support from tutor
- opportunities for increasing feelings of self-worth
- opportunities for additional support with learning
- opportunities and activities to develop friendships and social skills

10. Ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy

The anti-bullying policy will be subject to regular review. It will be reviewed in the light of incidents of bullying behaviour encountered. The prevention and intervention strategies in place will be reviewed regularly, at least once a year. Students and parents will be surveyed for their views and contributions at least once a year. The implementation and effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy will be an agenda item for staff meetings at least twice a year.

11. 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.

12. 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 students or staff or the harassment of students 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.

13. Oversight

At least once in every school term, the Principal will provide a report to the Board of Management setting out:

(i)   the overall number of bullying cases reported since the previous report to the Board and

(ii)   confirmation that all cases referred to at (i) above have been or are being dealt with in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy and the "Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools".

The minutes of the Board of Management meeting will record the Principal's report on this matter but without any identifying details of the pupils involved.

The Board of Management will undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation by the school.

07 May 2014

14. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on   _____

15. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents Council. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills and to the patron (CEIST) if requested.

16. The school reserves the right but not the obligation to apply its anti-bullying policy in respect of bullying that occurs at a location, activity, function or programme that is not school related if in the opinion of the principal and / or the board of management the alleged bullying has created a hostile environment at school for the victim, has infringed on the rights of the victim at the school and or has materially or substantially disrupted the education process or the orderly operation of the school.

Padraig Byrne   P.J. Gannon

Signed: _____   _____

(Chairperson of Board of Management)   (Principal)

07 May 2014   07 May 2014

Date : _____   _____

September 2014

Date of next review : _____

Appendix 1

TYPES OF BULLYING

The following are some of the types of bullying behaviour that can occur amongst students:

- o **Physical aggression**: This behaviour includes pushing, shoving , punching, kicking, poking and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While pupils often engage in 'mess fights', they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.

- o **Intimidation**: Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation: it may be based on the use of very aggressive body language with the voice being used as weapon. Particularly upsetting can be a facial expression which conveys aggression and /or dislike.

- o **Isolation / exclusion and other relational bullying**: This occurs where a certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or all of the class group. This practice is usually initiated by the person engaged in bullying behaviour and can be difficult to detect. It may be accompanied by writing insulting remarks about the pupil in public places, by passing around notes about or drawings of the pupil or by whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard. Relational bullying occurs when a person's attempts to socialise and form relationsips with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. One of the most common forms includes control: "Do this or I won't be your friend anymore" (implied or stated); a group ganging up against one person (girl or boy); non-verbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumours about a person or giving them the "silent treatment".

- o **Cyber-bullying**: This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, e-mail, instant messaging (IM), apps, gaming sites, chat-rooms and other online technologies. Being the target of inappropriate or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying. As cybe-bulling uses technology to perpetrate bullying behaviour and does not require face to face contract, cyber-bullying can occur at any time (day or night). Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyber-bulling. For example, a target may be sent homophobic text messages or pictures may be posted with negative comments about a person's sexuality, appearance etc.

- **Name calling** : Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) which hurts, insults or humiliates should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name-calling of this type refers to physical appearance, e.g. size or clothes worn. Accent or distinctive voice characteristics may attract negative attention. Academic ability can provoke name calling. This tends to operate at two extremes. There are those who are singled out for attention because they are perceived to be weak academically. At the other extreme there are those who, because they are perceived as high achievers, are also targeted.

- **Damage to property**: Personal property can be the focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, school books and other learning material or interference with a pupil's locker or bicycle. The content of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, stolen or hidden.

- **Extortion**: Demands for money may be made, often accompanied by threats (sometimes carried out in the event of the targeted pupil not delivering on the demand). A pupil may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to another who is engaged in bullying behaviour

Initiatives and Programmes
Initiatives and Programmes focused on developing students' awareness and understanding of bullying, including its causes and effects, will deal explicitly with the issue of identity-based bullying and in particular homophobic and transphobic bullying.

Among the measures considered will be:

- the inclusion of LGBT posters on notice boards

- discussions with parents about specific statements of welcome and respect for LGBT members of the school community

- teaching the Social, Personal, Health Education (SPHE) resource, *Growing Up LGBT* and participating in LGBT awareness events

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)	
Pupil concerned		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	Racist	Membership of er community	Other (specify)

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

9. Details of actions taken

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9. Signed : _____(Relevant Teacher) Date
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10. Date submitted to Principal / Deputy Principal _____