

**Cloontuskert N.S.
Cloontuskert,
Lanesborough,
Co. Roscommon.
N39 AT80.
Roll No. 18116S**



Anti-Bullying Policy

Reviewed: September 2022

Ratified: October 2022

Review: Annually

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 Cloontuskert 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. This anti-bullying policy operates in conjunction with the Code of Behaviour, which is used to address isolated instances of anti-social behaviour.

This policy was drawn up in order to comply with the new Anti-Bullying Procedures as outlined by the Minister for Education in Circular 0045/2013.

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

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
- cyber-bullying and

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- 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*.

The school acknowledges that there are three parties involved in bullying – those who bully, those who are bullied and those who witness the bullying. Staff and teachers bear this in mind when dealing with bullying incidences and try to support and work with all parties involved.

Our school believes that its pupils have a right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. The school has a clear policy on the promotion of RESPECT for everybody where it is made clear that bullying in any form is not tolerated.

Aims of the Policy

- To foster a school ethos of mutual and self-respect.
- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour.
- To outline, promote and raise awareness of preventative approaches that can be used in response to reported incidences of bullying.
- To develop a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour.
- To outline procedures for noting and reporting instances of bullying behaviour.
- To outline procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.

The following signs/symptoms may suggest that a child is being bullied:-

- anxiety about travelling to and from school.
- fear of going out to the yard at school break times.
- dreading going to school each day.
- loss of trust in friends.
- loss of confidence and self-esteem.
- unexplained or poorly explained physical injury.
- deterioration in school work, loss of concentration, loss of enthusiasm and interest in school.
- pattern of physical illnesses e.g. headaches, stomach aches.
- unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour. These may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or more especially after the school holidays.
- visible signs of anxiety or distress e.g. stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, bedwetting.
- possessions missing or damaged.
- increased requests for money or stealing (to meet extortion demands).

Why do children bully?

Children become bullies for many reasons, for example they may be:

- feeling insecure.
- experiencing bullying themselves.
- finding it difficult to fit in with other children.
- feeling under pressure to succeed.
- experiencing humiliation and in turn humiliate other children.
- lacking boundaries and their behaviour may be going unchallenged at home.
- experiencing physical, sexual or emotional abuse.

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying: Class Teacher

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber- bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows (see Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

The school staff will foster an atmosphere of friendship, respect and tolerance. Children's self-esteem will be developed through celebrating individual differences, achievements, acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour and manners and providing opportunities for success throughout the curriculum and school. Opportunities are taken to promote positive self-esteem, by highlighting pupil achievement in class, at school assemblies, on the school website and the school newsletter.

Similarly the school's Code of Behaviour emphasises the promotion of respectful behaviour through its "Strategies to Promote Positive Behaviour".

Teachers will help children develop empathy by discussing feelings and trying to put themselves in the place of others.

Children are made aware that bullying is an unacceptable form of behaviour. This is done explicitly through the Stay Safe Programme, the Walk Tall Programme in term 3 of each school year. Opportunities also arise in Religion lessons and other subjects;

The SPHE curriculum makes specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the inter-related areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships.

The Stay Safe programme at primary level is a personal safety skills programme which seeks to enhance children's self-protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying.

RSE- to discuss relationships, sexuality and identity based bullying at an age appropriate level in accordance with the Catholic Ethos of the school.

Use of opportunities that present in all curricular areas 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.

Comprehensive supervision and monitoring measures are in place.

Non-teaching staff are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them.

Cyber-bullying –All children sign an acceptable use policy with their parents in relation to the safe use of IT at school. The local Garda Liaison Officer meets with 5th & 6th class to talk about Cyber Bullying and to give advice on recognising, preventing and dealing with cyber bullying.

Sporting Activities to channel and learn how to control aggression

A specific focus on the needs of children with disabilities or SEN to promote inclusion, focusing on developing social skills, paying attention to key moments such as transitioning

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from primary to post-primary and cultivating a good school culture which has respect for all and helping one another as central.

Supports for staff; Annual review of policy and information on how to recognise the signs of bullying, implement effective strategies for preventing bullying and where appropriate, intervene effectively in bullying cases.

Temporary and substitute staff will be made aware of this policy and of the school's Code of Behaviour.

Staff consult regularly with the anti-bullying websites: www.antibullyingcampaign.ie
www.stickandstones.ie

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 (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*) :

Reporting Bullying

How to report

- Parents/guardian, pupils, non-teaching staff, teachers, members of local community should inform the school of incidents of bullying they hear of or witness.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher and in that way pupils will gain confidence in "telling". This confidence factor is important. It should be clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be tell tales but are acting responsibly.
- In the case of serious bullying, or where the relevant teacher considers that 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 and a copy provided to the Principal/ Deputy Principal.

Procedure to deal with a situation

- All students are made aware of the Anti-Bullying Policy formally by Principal each year.
- A copy of the policy is available on request.
- Students are reminded regularly of our Anti-Bullying policy.
- Students are encouraged to report all cases of bullying. (Principal, Class Teacher or Special Education Teacher).

When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the teacher will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.

Teacher will deal with the issue and in each case establish:

- The verdict
- The intent
- The seriousness
- The effect on the bullied student
- Rehabilitation of bullied student and person(s) involved in incident
- In each case, the students who are bullied and who bully are helped to deal with the issue by the appropriate school authorities.

Procedures for investigating & dealing with bullying

- Class teacher investigates incident of bullying outside the classroom by speaking to victim and bully separately in a calm, sensitive way.
- If a group is involved, each pupil is interviewed individually and later as a group.
- When it is ascertained that a pupil has been bullying, the pupil is made aware of a serious misbehaviour.
- Parents of bully and victim are met separately by the class teacher.
- Parents of the pupil who is bullying are asked to resolve the problem.
- If necessary, further meetings are arranged with parents/guardians of both bully and victim and Principal –in line with our code of behaviour.
- If the incident is unresolved, it is referred to Board of Management.
- A record of reporting, interviews, meetings and conclusions is made.

From the guidelines:

- a) 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*);
- b) 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;
- c) All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. 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;
- d) Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;
- e) 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;
- f) It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset;
- g) Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents;
- h) Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
- i) 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;
- j) 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;
- k) 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;

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- l) Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face them from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher;
 - m) It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s);
 - n) In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents 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 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;
 - o) 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;
 - p) It must also 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;
 - q) 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. This can have a therapeutic effect;
 - r) 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 provided.
 - s) 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;
 - t) 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;
 - u) 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.
7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

The school has the support of a NEPS psychologist in preparing and providing a programme of support for children who have been bullied and for those who are involved in bullying behaviour.

The Stay Safe, Walk Tall, SPHE, English and Grow in Love Programme offer opportunities for teachers to enhance pupil's self worth and to develop their friendship and social skills.

The school staff will foster an atmosphere of friendship, respect and tolerance. Children's self-esteem will be developed through celebrating individual differences, achievements, acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour and manners and providing opportunities for

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success throughout the curriculum and school. Opportunities are taken to promote positive self-esteem, by highlighting pupil achievement in class, at assemblies, on the school website and the school newsletter.

Where necessary, a referral may be sought by the school for counselling where appropriate.

Cyber-bullying

Cyber-bullying is a form of bullying which is carried out through an internet service such as email, a chat room, a discussion group, online social networking, instant messaging or web pages. It can also include bullying through mobile phone technologies such as texting. Cyber-bullying can happen to anyone and the bully can act anonymously if they want. People can also be bullied online by groups of people such as class groups or collective members of an online community.

If a child is being cyber-bullied it is possible that they are feeling powerless and isolated. All of the information and support regarding bullying applies to cyber-bullying.

Things a parent/child can do about cyber bullying:

- **Keep a record** (including time and date) - this may help in finding out who is sending the messages.
- **Don't reply** - the situation may get worse if your child replies to any bullying messages. By replying the bully gets what he or she wants...a reaction. Often, if your child doesn't reply the bully will leave them alone.
- **Tell someone** - ensure your child knows that they should talk to someone they trust, a parent, friend, or teacher.
- **Contact your child's mobile phone or internet service provider and report what is happening** - they can help you block messages or calls from certain senders.
- **Seek support if messages are threatening or serious** - if the cyber-bullying becomes threatening seek support from services in your area for example the Gardaí.
- **Change your child's contact details** - get a new user name for the internet, a new email account, a new mobile phone number and ensure your child only gives them out to their closest friends.
- **Keep your username and passwords private** - ensure your child keeps his/her personal information private so it becomes less likely that someone will misuse it.

Bullying by Adults

In the case of **intra-staff bullying**, Cloontuskert NS will adopt the procedures outlined in Section C (c2) of the INTO booklet: 'Working Together: Procedures and Policies for Positive Staff Relations'. A copy of this document is available for free download on the INTO website.

In the case of **Teacher – Child bullying**, a complaint should in the first instance be raised with the teacher in question by the parent/guardian of the child if possible and then if necessary referred to the Principal following the agreed grievance procedure for our school. Where it has not been possible to agree a framework for resolution, the matter should be referred in writing, by both parties to the Board of Management for investigation.

In the case of **Parent – Teacher** bullying, the Principal should be informed in the first instance, and if deemed necessary the Board of Management should subsequently be informed in writing.

In the case of **Parent/Visitor to the school – Child** bullying, the complaint should be referred in the first instance to the child's class teacher and subsequently to the Principal if unresolved.

In the case of **Principal – Parent/ Child** bullying, the matter should be raised with the Principal if possible, or referred to the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

Roles and Responsibilities

The implementation of this policy will be the responsibility of each class teacher, supervising teacher and non-teaching staff who will endeavour to uphold its aims and follow the procedures as stated above.

The Principal has overall responsibility for the implementation of the policy.

The Board of Management is responsible for ensuring that all members of the school community are enabled to deal effectively with Bullying. The Board will ensure that proper supervisory and monitoring measures are in place to prevent bullying and to deal with incidents appropriately as they arise.

It is the responsibility of Parents/Guardians to encourage their children to behave in an appropriate matter; to adhere to the rules of the school. Parents can also watch out for signs that their child is being bullied or bullying others. They have an important role to play in helping to build their child's self-esteem and confidence.

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.

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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	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Pupil	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

Playground	<input type="checkbox"/>
Classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corridor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Toilets	<input type="checkbox"/>
School Bus	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern

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6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) *

Physical Aggression	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cyber-bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>
Damage to Property	<input type="checkbox"/>	Intimidation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Isolation/Exclusion	<input type="checkbox"/>	Malicious Gossip	<input type="checkbox"/>
Name Calling	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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 _____

Appendix 2 Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate

The following are some practical tips for immediate actions that can be taken to help build a positive school culture and climate and to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour.

- Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.
- Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.
- Catch them being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN.
- Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.
- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.
- Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use.
- Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.
- Actively involve parents and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media.
- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.
- Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.
- All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- Ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.
- School staff can get pupils to help them to identify bullying “hot spots” and “hot times” for bullying in the school.
 - Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas, changing rooms, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision.
 - Hot times again tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when pupils are in the playground/school yard or moving classrooms.
- Support the establishment and work of student councils.

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Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation. The following checklist must be used for this purpose. The checklist is an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. In order to complete the checklist, an examination and review involving both quantitative and qualitative analysis, as appropriate across the various elements of the implementation of the school's anti-bullying policy will be required.

Yes /No

Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools</i> ?	Yes
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	Yes
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	Yes
Is the Board satisfied that school staff are sufficiently familiar with the policy and procedures to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy and procedures in their day to day work?	Yes
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	Yes
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	Yes
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	Yes
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	Yes
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	Yes
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	Yes
Has the Board discussed how well the school is handling all reports of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and not therefore included in the Principal's periodic report to the Board?	Yes
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	No
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	No
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	No
Has the data available from cases reported to the Principal (by the bullying recording template) been analysed to identify any issues, trends or patterns in bullying behaviour?	Yes
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	No
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	No

Signed 
 (Chairperson, Board of Management)

Date 16/10/2022

Signed 
 (Principal)

Date 16/10/2022

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Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the anti-bullying policy

To: _____

The Board of Management of _____ wishes to inform you that:

- The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of _____
(Date)
- This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in **Appendix 4** of the Department's *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Signed _____
(Chairperson, Board of Management)

Date _____

Signed _____
(Principal)

Date _____

Review

This plan will be reviewed and updated each year or earlier if deemed necessary by the Board of Management.

Signed: Padraig Bonnerton
(Principal)

Date: 16/10/2022

Signed: _____
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: _____

Date of next review: 14/10/2023