



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 Our Lady of Consolation 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.

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.

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

Our Lady of Consolation

- 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 relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows:

Class Teachers

Deputy Principal

School Principal

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

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*):

Prevention strategies will include the following:

Such initiatives will focus on developing pupils' awareness and understanding of bullying, including its causes and effects.

Circle time and class discussion on rights of individual – fairness etc.

Religion class, respect for others.

Poster, Leaflets, Role-play from time to time as appropriate

Monitor new pupils as to how they are settling in.

Teacher, parents and other pupils to be watchful.

Our Lady of Consolation

Encourage “victim” or other pupils to “tell” in confidence as early as possible. It will be made clear to all pupils

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*) :

A consistent and clear approach to dealing with bullying when it occurs is essential to effective practice.

Procedures for noting and reporting incidents are as follows

- a. If parents/or any responsible adult have concerns about a child being bullied they should inform the class teacher prior to approaching the parents of the alleged bully. This will provide the school with the opportunity to establish the facts in calm, not threatening fashion. All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. The teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
- b. Reports of bullying either from parents or Staff members will be recorded using the Template for recording bullying behaviour. The relevant teacher will investigate and act appropriately. If the teacher suspects that bullying occurred the Deputy Principal/Principal should be informed.
- c. Parents of those involved will be notified and given an opportunity to discuss the matter with the Teacher. Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible. It will be made clear to all involved (each set of parents & pupils) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil(s) and his/her parents in the school
- d. It should be made clear that children reporting incidents of bullying are acting responsibly.
- e. In instances of serious allegations of bullying, the complainant may be requested to submit details in writing. In certain circumstances, this information may have to be reported to other State Agencies/Persons.
- f. A record should be kept of how the matter was handled and the outcome. When the class moves on the succeeding teacher should be informed of any problems that existed. In instances of serious allegations of bullying, the complainant may be requested to submit details in writing. In certain circumstances, this information may have to be reported to other State Agencies/Persons.

The following practices for investigating and dealing with bullying will be employed:

- a. Calm, unemotional problem solving approach.
- b. Incidents are best investigated outside of the classroom situation to ensure privacy.

Our Lady of Consolation

- c. Teachers should speak separately to the children involved.
- d. If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first. Therefore all those involved will be met as a group.
- e. Parents should be informed where it has been determined that bullying has occurred.
- f. It may be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s).

Follow Up:

(a) If the issue has been satisfactorily resolved, follow up meetings with the relevant parties involved will 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.

(b) 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.

(c) 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.

(d) Check with the child/parents of the child bullied later to check that no further difficulties have arisen.

Recording of Bullying Behaviour

In all instances of established bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher will keep appropriate written records to assist her in resolving the issue. The relevant teacher will use the Recording Template to document all matters pertinent to the investigation.

The schools programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows (see Section 6.8 of the Anit-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):

Our Lady of Consolation School will support the pupil affected by bullying/bully themselves by using some of the following interventions in an age appropriate fashion and in keeping with the needs of the pupil concerned:

- a) Efforts to raise the child's self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed.
- b) Counselling.

Supervision and Monitoring of Pupil: 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.

Our Lady of Consolation

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.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on February 27th 2014.

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 patron if requested.

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.

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):

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 27th February 2014.

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

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: _____

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _____

(Principal)

Date: 27th September 2016

Date: 27th September 2016

Date of next review: September 2017