



# Anti-Bullying Policy

## Introduction

The Coosan N.S. Community believes that each pupil has a right to an education free from fear and intimidation.

The school regards bullying as a serious infringement of individual rights and a serious threat to the self-esteem and self-confidence of targeted pupil(s). Therefore it does not tolerate bullying of any kind.

Every report of bullying is treated seriously and dealt with, having due regard for the wellbeing of the targeted pupil(s) and the perpetrator(s).

The staff team works continuously to cultivate an environment free from bullying.

The immediate priority, should a bullying incident occur, is ending the bullying, (*thereby protecting the person(s) being targeted*) resolving the issues and restoring the relationships involved insofar as is practicable using a "Reform, not Blame" approach.

All pupils are expected to contribute to the creation and maintenance of a safe environment in the school. On becoming aware of any bullying situation involving members of the school community, they should notify a trusted responsible adult. Bullying behaviour is too serious not to report.

Pupils' participation in school life in general is encouraged through existing school structures. Awareness of bullying, and willingness to take action to prevent or stop it, is part of this participation.

## 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 (BOM) of Coosan National School has adopted the following Anti-Bullying Policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour. The 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 BOM 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 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 whole 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, investigating and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
  - On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

3. In accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, bullying is defined as follows:

Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conduct, by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

The following types of 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 travelling 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 will be dealt with as 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.

**Appendix 4** gives a list of specific examples of bullying behaviour. This list is not exhaustive.

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

4. The relevant teacher for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:
- The Class Teacher(s) initially supported by assigned SET to the class
  - The Principal/ Deputy Principal thereafter
5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) will be as follows:

Create a culture of "telling"

- Teachers should repeatedly reinforce the message that if anyone is the victim of bullying behaviour, they should not retaliate in any way, but they should tell an adult. Victims should be reassured that if they tell, something will be done about the bullying in a safe manner and all reported incidents will be dealt with.
- Class lessons to be provided to enable pupils "how to tell" (telling protocol)
- Bystanders can be the key to resolving bullying and if anyone witnesses bullying behaviour, they should always tell a teacher. This is not telling tales but a means of protecting victims.

Raising the awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour by:

- Displaying school's anti-bullying statement in school foyer and other prominent places around the school environment;
- Addressing aspects of bullying at morning assemblies. (What is bullying? What is not bullying? What to do if you feel you are being bullied? What to do if you see somebody else being bullied?)
- It is made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
- Engaging in formal teaching within the class setting through SPHE, Stay Safe, RE programmes, Anti-Bullying Programme and Resources from Anti-Bullying Campaign.ie and other materials researched and found to be appropriate by the school materials on identity bullying.
- Pupils are taught skills and encouraged to report any incident of bullying.

- The school runs an annual Anti-Bullying Week/Friendship Week during which classes partake in extra activities and lessons intended to increase awareness of bullying. This week also aims to further build empathy, respect and resilience in students.
- Anti-bullying posters are displayed throughout the school in an effort to encourage the correct approach to dealing with bullying behaviour.
- As self-esteem is an important factor in determining behaviour, our school, through our curricular and extra-curricular activities, aims to provide pupils with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth.
- Children are educated on appropriate online behaviour and how to stay safe online while developing a culture of reporting any concerns about cyber-bullying.
- Webwise Primary Programme is used in order to assist and support teachers when teaching about safe and responsible use of the internet.
- Internet/Cyber Safety workshops are organised for children & parents .

#### Other Strategies:

- Formal programmes of work are a vital element in raising children's self-esteem and equipping children to cope with bullying.
  - Modeling of respectful behaviour and language by teachers and staff
  - Promotion of extra-curricular activities which encourage co-operation among pupils (to extend this beyond sport e.g. drama, dance, music)
  - Encouraging students to look out for each other and to be responsible for their own behaviour
  - All teachers are required to be vigilant on yard duty- record all incidences in the Yard Book and or incident report in order to monitor repeat offenders
  - Immediate affirmation of children who report incidents of bullying which they have witnessed
  - Circle-time sessions, role-play, Socially Speaking programs and puppetry are methodologies which are used to discuss and explore issues of bullying through special education teaching lessons
  - Each class has a set of class rules which complement the school's Code of Behaviour
  - Insure Code of behaviour is received and signed by all parents
  - Renew the signs around the school
  - Ensure supervision at all times when pupils can access the internet
  - Sanctions for unauthorised use of the internet/electronic devices will be imposed as per Code of Behaviour and AUP
  - All teachers to do a lesson on internet safety- coinciding with Internet Safety Day
  - Parent workshop on anti-bullying with a focus on cyber bullying
6. The school's procedure for investigation, follow up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying are as follows:

#### **Incidents of Bullying will be dealt with on a staged basis:**

##### **Stage 1**

**All reports of bullying must be dealt with initially by the class teacher supported by the class assigned SET.**

1. When a pupil tells a teacher s/he is being bullied, it is important to gather all of the facts from both sides (What, where, when, who, why?). This will involve an interview with the alleged bully using a template for recording bullying behaviour in Appendices (**Appendix 3**).
2. In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best to resolve the situation.
3. The aim for the class 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).
4. Non-teaching staff will be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them to the relevant teacher.
5. The teacher should take a calm, unemotional, problem-solving approach.
6. All sides are listened to separately and notes are taken.

7. The notes are brief, factual and should be void of emotional or judgemental language.
8. Instances are investigated outside the classroom to avoid public humiliations. The SET Teacher will supervise the class and class teacher will conduct the interview(s) in the SET Teacher's classroom.
9. All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regards to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way. (See Anti Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post -Primary Schools 6.8.9 page 30-31) for further suggestions.
10. It is explained to the alleged bully how hurtful their behaviour is and attempts are made to encourage them to empathise with the alleged victim.
11. The child/ children involved will be asked to sign "Pupil Behaviour Promise 1" (**Appendix 1**). This is also signed by parents/guardians and the Principal.

### Stage 2

If this child breaks "Pupil Behaviour Promise 1" and re-offends, then the Principal and Class Teacher will interview the child/children again. It is explained to them that this is their second time offending and that they have not committed to their promise.

Again, attempts will be made to resolve the situation. Once more, students will sign a second copy of "Pupil Behaviour Promise". This has to be signed once again by their parents/guardians and the principal. They are now advised by the principal that if they break this promise again, they will have a meeting with the principal and their parents in the office and could face suspension.

1. Parents and pupils are required to cooperate with any investigations and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible.
2. Information spoken about should not become available, so that the victim would not be further tormented (need to know basis)

### Stage 3

If a child breaks their promise twice then the Principal/Deputy Principal meets with the child and the parent (with copies of completed documents — i.e. Appendices 1 and 3 - (Pupil Promise and Record of Bullying Behaviour) and the child may be suspended for up to 3 days. The Principal will discuss the matter with the chairperson of the Board of Management and if deemed appropriate seek the permission of the Board of Management to suspend the pupil for up to 3 days.

Recording of incidents:

Incidents will be recorded using the templates in appendices 1 and 3.

At least once every school term, the Principal will provide a report to the BOM, setting out the overall number of bullying cases reported to him/her using the template in appendix 3 with confirmation that all cases are being dealt with in accordance with procedure.

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

#### Victims

- Victims are reassured from the outset that they are not to blame.
- Strategies for restoring self-esteem are explored between teachers and parents/guardians.
- Where deemed necessary, the child in consultation with parents may be referred for counselling.
- Staged approach- class support, school support (as per Continuum -Behavioural, Emotional and Social difficulties- NEPS).
- The parents/guardians of the pupils concerned will be advised to contact the local Gardaí if appropriate.

### **Bullies**

- Where deemed necessary, the child in consultation with parents/guardians may be referred for counselling. They may need to learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others. Empathy awareness needs to be developed.
- Clinical referral and assessment may be necessary.
- Staged approach - class support, school support (as per Continuum-Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties- NEPS)
- Incidents of bullying can extend beyond the school and the journey to and from school is one which can provide particular opportunities for bullying to occur. The school's policy will be given to those who are closely involved at this stage (e.g. Outside sports coach) so that if bullying behaviour is witnessed by them, that they may report it to the school.
- In certain cases too, it may be necessary to invite assistance from formal agencies such as Gardaí, TUSLA, Local Youth Groups etc.
- The school will constantly remind parents/guardians of the dangers of "cyber- bullying" as can happen with the use of social networking sites and mobile phones. We also direct their attention to the school's internet Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) and the school's policy on Mobile Phones & Electronic Games.

Apart from the above, the school cannot be responsible for disagreements between pupils that happen outside the school grounds but will make reasonable efforts to cooperate with parents/guardians in assisting them to resolve the issues.

#### **8. Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils:**

The BOM 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 BOM confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practical 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 Travelling community.

#### **10. Bullying by Adults:**

In the case of intra-staff bullying, Coosan N.S. 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. 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.

**11. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the policy:**

The evaluation of the policy will happen on both an informal (through teacher observation) and formal basis (use of surveys and questionnaires).

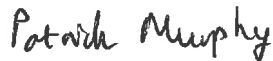
**Success Criteria:**

- Positive feedback from teachers, parents/guardians and pupils
- Well-being and happiness of the whole school community in the light of incidents of bullying behaviour encountered and fewer problems in the yard.
- Increase in numbers of children reporting

12. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 13/2/2023

13. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parent's Association. A copy of the policy will be made available to the Department and patron if requested.

14. 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 Parent's Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.



Signed: **Fr. Patsick Murphy**  
(Chairperson of Board of Management)



Signed: **Ms. S. Cunningham**  
(Principal)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ 13/2/2023 \_\_\_\_\_

Date of next review: \_\_\_\_\_ February 2024 \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix 1**



**Pupil Behaviour Promise**

I \_\_\_\_\_ know that all of my fellow pupils are different from each other and from me in many ways. *(These might include hair colour, skin colour, what we wear, height, weight, size, accent, religion, nationality, where we live or have lived, whether we are loud or quiet, find learning hard, do not like sports etc).*

I would not like to be treated unfairly and made to feel bad by any of my fellow-pupils because of any of these differences or just because they did not like me.

I know that I have a right to be different from other pupils and that this does not give anyone the right to treat me unfairly or to be mean to me.

I know I should be treated fairly, equally and respectfully in school because of the school's Code of Behaviour.

I know I should be treated fairly, equally and respectfully outside of school too.

I also know that all other pupils should be treated fairly, equally and respectfully.

It is wrong to treat anyone any other way.

I therefore promise that in future, I will treat all my fellow-pupils fairly, equally and respectfully despite our differences and whether I like them or not.

The child will write the following: *"I will always treat (N) fairly and respectfully"*

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*Pupil:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Class:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Pupil's signature:* \_\_\_\_\_

*Parent(s)/guardian(s) signature:* \_\_\_\_\_

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

*Principal's Signature:* \_\_\_\_\_

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



## 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. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.
- Catch them being good. Notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- Constantly 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.
- 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 phones and internet use.
- Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.
- Actively involve parents/guardians 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 a pupil friendly language in the classroom and common areas.
- All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- Ensure there is adequate playground/schoolyard/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 lining up in the playground/school yard or moving between the yard and classrooms or between classrooms.
- Support the establishment and work with student councils.

## Appendix 3



## Template for recording bullying behavior

## 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 4



### Types of bullying

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

- **Physical Aggression:** This behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking, 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.
- **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 a weapon. Particularly upsetting can be facial expression which conveys aggression and/or dislike.
- **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 or drawings of the pupil or by whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard. Relational bullying occurs when a persons’ attempts to socialise and form relationships 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 (boy or girl), non-verbal gesturing, malicious gossip, spreading rumours about a person or giving them the “silent treatment”.
- **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, email, 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 cyber-bullying uses technology to perpetrate bullying behaviour and does not require face-to-face contact, cyber-bullying can occur anytime (day or night). Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyber-bullying. For example, a target may be sent homophobic text messages or pictures may be posted with negative comments about a persons’ sexuality, appearance etc.
- **Name Calling:** Persistent name calling directed at the same individual(s) that hurts, insults or humiliates should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name calling of this type refers to physical appearance, eg. size or clothes worn. Accent or distinguishing voice characteristics may attract negative attention. Academic ability can also 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 phones or other devices, school books and other learning materials or interference with pupil’s locker or bicycle. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, 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.

## Appendix 5



### 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> ?	
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	
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?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	
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?	
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	
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?	
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	

Signed Patrick Murphy

Chairperson, Board of Management

Date 13/2/23.

Signed Steph Cpl

Principal

Date 13/2/23.



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

To: Coosan N.S. Parents Association

The Board of Management of Coosan N.S. 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 13/2/23. [date].
- This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in the Department's *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Signed: Patrick Murphy

Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: 13/2/23.

Signed: Steph G

Principal

Date: 13/2/23.