

Policy to Counter Bullying Behaviour

Rationale

The Board of Management and Staff strive to ensure that Castlerea Community School is a welcoming school. We acknowledge that everyone at this school has the right to feel secure and happy. We realize that only if this is the case that all members of the school community will be able to achieve their potential. Bullying of any type hinders this and thus hinders equality of opportunity.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies and goals

- Mission Statement
- Code of Behaviour
- Anti-Violence Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Substance Abuse Policy
- Internet Policy - Acceptable Use
- Strategy on Cyber Bullying
- Guidance Policy
- Pastoral Care Strategy
- School Tours and Field Trip Policy

Legal Framework

Castlerea Community School operates within the legal framework of the Education Act 1998; The Education Welfare Act 2000, The Equal Status Act 2000, The Education of Persons with Special Educational Needs Act 2002 and other legislation pertaining to education.

The Equal Status Act 2000 expressly forbids discrimination on a number of grounds. Discrimination means that 'a person is treated less favourably than another person is, has been or would be treated'.

The nine grounds include

Marital Status	Family Status	Sexual Orientation
Gender	Disability	Member of the Traveller Community
Age	Race	Religion

(Treating a person who has not attained the age of 18 years less favourably or more favourably than another, whatever that other person's age, shall not be regarded as discrimination on the age ground.)

Definition of Bullying

This document defines bullying as *repeated, inappropriate behaviour whether by word, physical action or otherwise directly or indirectly applied by one or more persons against another person or persons which undermines the individual's right to personal dignity.*

Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour which may cause distress will not be permitted in the school will not be considered as bullying.

Bullying takes many forms.

Physical Aggression

Damage to Property

Intimidation

Abusive Telephone Calls

Isolation and deliberate exclusion

Name Calling

Slagging

Cyber Bullying through Mobile Phones, Internet etc.

Extortion

Impact of Bullying

The Negative effects of bullying on the individual are well documented and may include:-

- Low self-esteem
- Poor academic performance - poor attendance
- Sadness or depression
- Loneliness
- Suicidal ideation
- Other more long term effects

Bullying behaviour is often seen as a manifestation of feelings of insecurity, lack of self-confidence and self-esteem. Research highlights envy and resentment as strong motives for bullying.

It is important for parents to realise that bullying is very often a complex and deep-rooted issue. Time and patience is required to achieve a resolution.

Scope of Policy

This policy applies to the whole school community in their relationship with students. In conjunction with the Code of Behaviour it includes lunchtime behaviour, and the journey to and from school. It embraces all school activities, outings and tours.

Aim of Anti-Bullying Policy

- To maintain a positive school climate which focuses on respect for the individual.
- To increase knowledge and awareness among parents, students and staff as to the extent and effects of bullying
- To promote early disclosure
- To encourage active intervention by other students
- To promote mental health
- To provide a supportive environment to students who are bullied.
- To provide intervention strategies for students who bully.
- To promote respect for diversity.

Educational Interventions

CCS adopts a whole school approach to bullying behaviour. We believe at CCS that prevention is better than cure so therefore all staff will be vigilant for any signs of bullying and will take reports of bullying seriously. In keeping with its Pastoral Care policy members of the school staff will teach to ensure that students know the difference between bullying and the normal squabbles and disagreements that occur between young people. Bullying as an issue is covered in SPHE classes. Parents are issued with an information booklet on Bullying at enrolment.

Procedure for dealing with an alleged incident of bullying

Student ≤ - ≥ Student

1. Students are encouraged to tell their parents/guardians or some member of the school community if they are being bullied. They may tell the Prefects, Members of the Student Council or any member of the school staff if they are the victims of bullying. Keeping the problem from either the school or parents will not solve problems. Bullying behaviour thrives in an atmosphere of uncertainty and secrecy in which the person being bullied feels a sense of hopelessness and futility against the person bullying. We see that this will only prolong the period of time a person is made to suffer.
2. Reports are taken seriously and are investigated by relevant personnel.
3. Both the students who are being bullied and the student doing the bullying will be interviewed in order to establish the facts and the emotional issues involved.
4. Issues appropriate to the incident will be discussed with the students involved.
5. Each student will be given the opportunity to talk with the emphasis on finding an appropriate solution to the problem.
6. A written record will be kept of the incidents.
7. Serious incidents of bullying will be reported to the Principal or Deputy Principal.
8. The parents may be informed of the incidents at any stage in the process and are asked to support strategies to tackle the problem.
9. The person bullying and his/her parents will be apprised of the consequences of their actions and the sanctions, which may be used which may include suspension.
10. Permanent exclusion from the school is the ultimate sanction.

Further Interventions

1. Restorative processes may be used to repair the harm and hurt caused by an incident of bullying.
2. When a particular bullying incident has been resolved the students involved may be referred further with the aim of restoring confidence and self-esteem in both parties.

Bullying of school staff

This policy recognises the possibility of bullying behaviour by students towards staff members, particularly teachers. This may take the form of name calling, aggressive behaviour in class, physical assault, sexual innuendo and insinuation, interference with property, etc. All of these can have serious implications for the health and welfare of the staff member involved. Such incident will be dealt with in accordance with the Code of Behaviour.

Teacher behaviour

As per the Department of Education and Science Guidelines (p.3) *a teacher may, unwittingly or otherwise, engage in, instigate or otherwise reinforce bullying behaviour in a number of ways:-*

- ◆ *Using sarcasm or other insulting or demeaning form of language when addressing pupils;*
- ◆ *Making negative comments about a pupil's appearance or background;*
- ◆ *Humiliating directly or indirectly a pupil who is academically weak or outstanding, or vulnerable in other way.*
- ◆ *Using any gesture or expression of a threatening or intimidatory nature, or any form of degrading physical contact or exercise.*

In accordance with the DES Child Protection Guidelines *"The more extreme forms of bullying behaviour, when they are perpetrated by adults rather than children, would be regarded as physical or emotional abuse".*

Such incidents would be dealt with in accordance with the Child Protection Guidelines.

In the case of a complaint regarding a staff member, this should normally in the first instance be raised with the staff member in question and if necessary, with the Principal.

Where cases, relating to either a pupil or a teacher are unresolved at school level, the matter should be referred to the Board of Management.
If not solved at Board level, it should then be referred to the Inspectorate.

This policy will be reviewed regularly in the light of new research.