



Anti - Bullying Policy

The wellbeing of the whole school community underpins all school policies and plans;

'Wellbeing is present when a person realises their potential, is resilient in dealing with the normal stresses of their life, takes care of their physical wellbeing and has a sense of purpose, connection and belonging to a wider community. It is a fluid way of being and needs nurturing throughout life.'

1. Introduction:

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 Scoil Chríost Rí 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.

2. Rationale:

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.
 - ☐ 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

1

-explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying, internet safety and identity- based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.

- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils.
- Support 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. Definition of Bullying:

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

Bullying is defined as 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.
- 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.

In addition, in the context of these procedures 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.

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 shall be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

This definition includes a wide range of behaviour, whether verbal or written, whether physical or social, whether targeting person or property, whether carried out directly or indirectly or through any electronic medium, which could harm a child or undermine their self-esteem or confidence.

(Appendix 1 gives a list of specific examples of bullying behaviour. This list is not exhaustive)

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.

4. Promoting a Positive School Climate:

The following strategies and school-wide approach are in place in the school to promote a positive school culture and climate and to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour.

The leadership team and staff are committed to promoting the wellbeing of pupils and colleagues by;

- modelling respectful behaviour to all members of the school community.
- explicitly teaching pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- highlighting and explicitly teaching school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.
- catching pupils being good - noticing and acknowledging desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.

- consistently tackling the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school, including offering alternative positive language – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or AEN.
- actively watching out for signs of bullying behaviour and ensuring appropriate supervision.
- getting pupils and staff to identify bullying ‘hot spots’ and ‘hot times’ for bullying in the school (playground, school yard, outdoor areas, etc.)
- ensuring that there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.
- giving constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- having a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour that are compliant with the school rules and routines.
- explicitly teaching pupils about the appropriate use of social media.
- positively encouraging pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use.
- following up and following through with pupils who ignore the rules.
- actively promoting the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.
- awarding Kindness Certificates in each class every month.
- ‘Incredible Me’ book in the staffroom where staff can add messages in relation to children who are kind/helpful/being a good friend. These messages are read by the Principal or Deputy Principal at assembly or told to parents.
- class led assemblies where we celebrate inclusion, kindness etc.
- monthly assemblies with Principal and Deputy Principal to celebrate kindness and successes
- greeting children with enthusiasm by teachers, staff and fellow students in order to make them feel valued and appreciated
- encouraging positive relations between students and staff and creating a sense of belonging through activities, events and traditions.
- recognising and celebrating students’ achievements, both academically and behaviourally - using positive reinforcement techniques such as praise, certificates, or students of the month awards to acknowledge efforts and contributions.
- ensuring that the school environment is physically and emotionally safe for all the students and providing support in addressing conflicts and promoting positive relationships.
- organising annual ‘Mental Health Days’ where children enjoy initiatives that promote healthy eating, exercise, friendship, kindness and mindfulness.
- arranging a variety of wellbeing activities through the Wellness Committee, including ‘Anti Bullying Week’, ‘The Shoe Box Appeal’ and initiatives to promote kindness on the yard.
- establishing a Yoga Room for AETs and ANAs to use with students.
- appointing an Infant coordinator to liaise and meet with the infant teachers regularly in relation to Student Wellbeing, initiatives to promote play, fun and self-esteem.
- selecting and training leaders and play ambassadors to promote a culture of playfulness, kindness and respect among peers.
- fostering a culture of resilience that equips students with the skills and mindset to navigate challenges through programmes like Roots Of Empathy, Incredible Years, Friends for Life which develop student’s emotional intelligence, self-awareness, resilience and empathy.
- arranging staff CPD in trauma, dysregulation etc.
- applying for the ISPCC Anti Bullying Shield.
- applying for the renewal of our Amber Flag.
- hosting a Multicultural Day to celebrate all nationalities and cultures in our school and to promote inclusion.
- developing diverse student-led committees (including Student Wellness Committee, Green Team and Active Team) dedicated to organizing school events and initiatives.
- arranging guest speakers to deliver workshops on mental health and anti-bullying.
- Implementing a playground makeover project and assessing and upgrading play areas within the school premises ensuring safety, accessibility and a variety of equipment for different age groups and interests.
- creating new notice boards to highlight and showcase students' work, Aistear, sport

achievements, STEM, numeracy, literacy, wellbeing, culture, inclusion, student committees, etc.

3

- creating a 'Wellbeing Folder' on the staff shared drive with resources, plans, policies and information on both student and staff wellbeing.
- making staff aware of Spectrum Life and their services.
- administering surveys to both students and staff to gauge current perceptions of school culture and identify areas for improvement.
- including more opportunities for play-based learning across subjects to encourage creativity, collaboration, critical thinking and fun.
- embedding the principles of positive school culture and community building into school policies, procedures and practices to ensure their sustainability beyond the three-year DEIS plan.
- enhancing the physical environment of the school by creating welcoming and vibrant spaces, incorporating student artwork and maintaining clean and well-equipped facilities to promote exercise and play.
- regularly referring to and discussing Anti-Bullying Policy, procedures, incidents etc at staff meetings, IST meetings and SMT Meetings.
- displaying various traditions and backgrounds within the school community.
- initiatives put in place for target children with HSCL and SCP.
- AETs will target pupils with social difficulties and give individual and group support.
- 'Friends for Life, 'Fun Friends,' and 'Roots of Empathy' programmes to develop emotional literacy, resilience, kindness and empathy.

5. Education and Prevention Strategies:

The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyberbullying and all grounds of identity-based bullying including particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that may be used by the school are those included in the following:

- The Stay Safe programme.
- The Anti-Bullying module of the SPHE programme as it applies each year. ● Circle Time.
- Roots of Empathy.
- Friends for Life Program.
- The Incredible Years Program.
- Wellness Committee.
- Staff and Students work hard each year to retain the Amber Flag for Mental Health Awareness, which was first awarded in 2018 and has been renewed every year since. ● Buddy Bench.
- Monthly Kindness Awards.
- 'Incredible You' book in staffroom for positive messages in relation to student's behaviour to be read at assembly.
- Scoil Chríost Rí were also awarded the ISPCC Anti-Bullying Flag and Limerick's Pay it

Forward Kindness Flag in 2018 and work hard each year on new initiatives for those flags. ●
The Walk Tall Programme.
● Anti-Bullying Week for Staff and Students.

4

- Annual Mental Health Awareness Week (World Mental Health Day October 10th) ● A variety of lessons on kindness, friendship, inclusion, acts of kindness activities etc. ● Multicultural Day.
- Increase in levels of supervision of pupils at play, at times of arrival and dismissal from school and at the many sporting and other extra- curricular activities which this school provides.
- Kindness Advent Calendars.
- WiFi blocker.
- HSCL Officer assisting with incidents and helping promote positive behaviour. ● Linking in with parents when needed.
- Staff record and keep track of minor incidents in their personal class notes in case they escalate.
- Pupils are helped to examine the issue of bullying in a calm rational way, outside of the tense context of particular bullying incidents. In the process they are made more aware of the nature of bullying and the various forms that it can take.
- Pupils are made aware that the consequences of bullying behaviour are always bad for those who are targeted, even if this is not always obvious at the time.
- Pupils are encouraged to recognise, reject and report bullying behaviour, either spontaneously or through questionnaires that are used in the school, including use of PSB – Personal Safety Box.
- Through staff meetings and presentations, the school staff is made aware of the nature of bullying and the signs that might indicate that a pupil is being bullied. They are encouraged to be vigilant in watching out for signs of bullying and to report any suspicion of bullying they may have to the “Relevant Staff Member.”
- Mobile phone use by pupils in school is forbidden.
- Books on well-being in our wellness library in Room 16.
- Books on refugees, LGBT+ etc used for guided reading.
- A copy of the INTO Respect Document: Creating a Welcoming and Positive School Climate to Prevent Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying is available for all teachers in the school. [\(RESPECT\)](#)
- Staff Well-Being: Wellness Committee and Social Committee do a number of events and initiatives to promote positive well-being and relationships with staff i.e. Pal-en-tines month, March-a-thon, group activities, Treat Thursdays etc.
- Scoil Chríost Rí were awarded the ISPCC Anti-Bullying Shield in 2023.

6. Investigating and Dealing with Bullying Behaviour:

The relevant personnel in the school who will deal with bullying behaviour are as follows:

- Class Teacher
- AET
- ANA
- Teacher on Supervision
- Deputy Principal
- Principal
- Board of Management

In Scoil Chríost Rí the teacher/ANA or teacher/ANA on duty (if the incident occurs in the playground) will investigate and deal with the incident in the first instance. This information will be

communicated to the relevant teacher.

If required, the relevant teacher will seek advice from school management when deciding if the behaviour constituted bullying.

5

If bullying persists / re-occurs involving the same children, the Principal then investigates the bullying incidents.

Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying:

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, worry box notes will be in-vestigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;

The school's procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying behaviour are as follows:

- The primary aim for the relevant staff member in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is necessary, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame).
- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the staff member will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant staff member. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance.
- 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.
- Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, caretaker, external visitors and cleaners are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant staff member.
- Parents/guardians and pupils are required to cooperate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is necessary, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible.
- The approach being taken by the school will be explained clearly to all parties from the outset. A calm, unbiased problem-solving approach will be taken when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents/guardians.
- Incidents are generally investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- Interviews are conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils/staff members concerned.
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant staff member will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This is done calmly, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
- If a group is involved, each child will be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved will be met as a group. At the group meeting, each child will be asked for their account of

what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements. It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s). • In cases where it has been determined by the relevant staff member that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents/guardians of the parties involved will 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 will give parents/guardians an opportunity to discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the support for their pupils.

- Where the relevant staff member has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to them how they are in breach of the school's anti bullying policy

6

and efforts should be made to try to get them to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied. It will also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents/guardians) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, it is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, their parents/guardians and the school.

- The 'Relevant Staff Member' does not apportion blame but rather treats bullying behaviour as an 'incident' that can and must be remedied. S/he emphasises that the intention is not to punish perpetrators but to talk to them, to explain how harmful and hurtful bullying is and to seek a promise that it will stop. If that promise is forthcoming and is honoured there will be no penalty and that will be the end of the matter.

- When an investigation is completed and/or a bullying situation is resolved the 'Relevant Staff Member' will complete a report, to include the findings of the investigation, the strategy adopted and the outcome of the intervention, as well as any relevant information.

7. Procedures for Recording Bullying Behaviour:

The school has clear procedures for the formal noting and reporting of bullying behaviour. These are as follows:

It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner.

- All records are maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation.
- While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant staff member, they will make their professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding the same.

It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner.

1 Informal – pre determination that bullying has occurred.

- All staff must personally log or communicate any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them.
- All incidents must be communicated to the relevant teacher.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
- The relevant teacher must inform the management person on their year group and principal of all incidents being investigated.

- The relevant teacher must personally log any reports (Behaviour ABC form)

2 Formal Stage 1-Determination that bullying has occurred/incident report

- When it is clear to the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must complete a school incident report form (ABC form) which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and re-store, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- These can be stored in the child's file in the classroom and a copy sent to the

principal. 7

3 Formal Stage 2 - Bullying established and investigated Holy Family Senior School formal bullying recording form (see attached) is used

The relevant teacher must use the school's formal bullying recording form attached here to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

- 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;
- When the school's formal bullying form is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy sent to the principal. The copy will be stored in the child's file in the classroom and the original sent to the school office for filing. This will be retained until the pupil reaches the age of 18 and reported as part of the anti-bullying procedures to the BOM

8. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying: (see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools) :

Bullied Pupils:

- Pupils who have been bullied will be constantly monitored and minded by all staff. They will be afforded, where necessary, individual lessons to equip them with strategies, to build resilience and to promote their self-esteem.
- Children are given opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to increase their sense of self-worth and to develop their friendship and social skills thereby building resilience whenever this is needed.
- Strategies include:
 - identifying personal strengths.
 - celebrating achievements and accomplishments.
 - using positive self-talk and avoiding negative self-talk.
 - helping the child to form friendships with other children so that they have a strong social network.
 - helping the child to understand what is fair and acceptable behaviour. This provides

security. Once the child has a strong sense of right and wrong they will be able to speak up when treated unfairly.

Bullying Pupils:

- Pupils who have engaged in bullying behaviour will also be constantly monitored by all staff. They will be afforded individual lessons to help them to understand the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
- Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour are also given support to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.
- Strategies include:
 - explaining and teaching understanding of empathy
 - making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are not blamed or punished and get a “clean sheet” - making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are doing the right and honourable thing and giving them praise for this

8

- helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school)
- using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils’ feelings of self-worth
- in dealing with negative behaviour in general, encouraging staff members and parents/guardians to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child

Scoil Chríost Rí will strive, through both our curricular and extra-curricular programmes, to provide all pupils, especially those affected by bullying, with opportunities to develop a strong, positive sense of self-worth.

9. 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.
- The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps as are reasonably necessary 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.

10. Role of Parents/Guardians:

- Parents/guardians and other adults who interact with children and young people, in formal and informal settings, have a huge role to play in preventing bullying and also in supporting children and young people who are: being bullied, have bullied someone else or have witnessed someone being bullied.
- Adults, and parents/guardians in particular, need to:
 - be good role models for children and young people;
 - encourage kindness and acceptance of others;
 - encourage the development of new skills and interests to help further develop self-esteem; - teach young people to respect and value difference and diversity;

- make it their business to know what bullying is and understand the different types and forms of bullying;
- educate themselves in relation to social media and take an active interest in how children and young people are using the internet, social media and mobile phones;
- know, and lookout for, the signs that a child or young person may be being bullied;
- offer support and listen to what a child or young person wants you to do to help;
- make it clear that bullying is not acceptable behaviour.

11. Implementation and Review:

- The principal will provide a report each year to the Board of Management setting out: the overall number of bullying cases reported since the previous report to the Board and confirmation that all cases 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 not include any identifying details of the pupils involved.
- The policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year using the standardised checklist.
- Written notification that the review has been completed will be provided to the Parents/guardians' Association.

9

12. Ratification and Communication:

- This policy is reviewed annually and was ratified by the Board of Management at a meeting on the
- The policy is available to all members of staff in hard copy and online.
- It is available to parents/guardians on request and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

Signed: __Tom__ Mitchell
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date:

Date of next review: May 2024

Appendix 1

A copy of the INTO Respect Document: Creating a Welcoming and Positive School Climate to Prevent Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying is available for all teachers in the school. [\(RESPECT\)](#)

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 and tripping people which can 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. A facial expression which conveys aggression and/or dislike can be particularly upsetting.

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 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; non-verbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumours about a person or giving them the "silent treatment".

Cyber-bullying:

10

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 cyber-bullying uses technology to perpetrate bullying behaviour and does not require face to face contact, cyber-bullying can occur at any time (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 person's sexuality, appearance etc.

Name calling:

Persistent name-calling directed at the same child which hurts, insults or humiliates, is 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 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. 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.

Impact and Indicators of Bullying Behaviour:

Impacts:

- Pupils who are being bullied may develop feelings of insecurity, humiliation and extreme anxiety and thus may become more vulnerable. While they may not talk about what is happening to them, their suffering is indicated through changes in mood and behaviour. Extreme cases of bullying may result in suicide. It is, therefore, essential to be alert to changes in behaviour as early intervention can be very effective.
- Pupils who witness bullying may also be affected and may suffer in similar ways to those who are bullied. For example, pupils who witness identity-based bullying and share that identity can experience anxiety and feel under threat themselves. Pupils can also feel guilt or distress at not being able to help the person being bullied.
- There are also consequences for individuals who engage in bullying behaviour. • Pupils who become involved in such behaviour can be at higher risk of depression. Other possible long-term consequences may include an increased risk of developing an antisocial personality, anxiety disorders, low self-esteem, a likelihood of substance abuse and lawbreaking behaviour in adulthood and decreased educational and occupational attainment.

Indicators:

The following signs and symptoms may suggest that a pupil is being bullied:

- Anxiety about travelling to and from school e.g. requesting parents/guardians to drive or collect him/her, changing travel routes, avoiding regular times for travelling to and from school;
- Unwillingness to go to school, refusal to attend, truancy;

11

- Deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school;
- Pattern of physical illnesses e.g. headaches, stomach aches;
- Unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour which may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or more especially after longer school holidays. - Visible signs of anxiety or distress e.g. stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, bedwetting;
- Spontaneous out-of-character comments about either pupils or teachers; - Possessions missing or damaged;
- Increased requests for money or stealing money;
- Unexplained bruising or cuts or damaged clothing; and
- Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling them. There may be other signs depending on the individual and their circumstances.

The above signs do not necessarily mean that a pupil is being bullied but if repeated or occurring in combination, these signs do warrant investigation in order to establish what is affecting the pupil.

Characteristics Associated with Bullying:

The child who engages in bullying behaviour:

- It is important to recognise that any pupil can be bullied or can engage in bullying behaviour. • A significant proportion of bullying is not merely behavioural but is rooted in a lack of respect for diversity and in social inequalities. "Prejudice-based" or "identity-based" bullying can be a significant

factor in bullying behaviour.

- Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour tend to display aggressive attitudes combined with a low level of self-discipline. They may lack any sense of remorse convincing themselves that the other person deserves the treatment they are receiving.
- Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour can be attention seeking: setting out to impress bystanders and responding to the reaction their behaviour provokes. They can lack the ability to empathise. They can appear unaware or indifferent to the other person's feelings.
- Pupils who exhibit bullying behaviour often suffer from a lack of confidence and have low self-esteem.
- However, it must also be recognised that pupils who engage in bullying behaviour do not always intend to bully or may not recognise the potential negative impact of their words and actions on others.
- Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may also have been bullied

themselves. **The child who is bullied:**

- As pupils can be particularly quick to notice differences in others, pupils who are perceived as different in some way can be more prone to encounter such behaviour. However, the pupils who are most at risk of being bullied are those who react in a vulnerable and distressed manner. The seriousness and duration of the bullying behaviour can be related to the pupil's continuing response to the verbal, physical or psychological aggression.
- Pupils who are bullied often experience difficulties in speaking up about bullying. The difficulties include:
 - fear of reprisals;
 - concerns about being perceived as a "tell-tale" for reporting bullying;
 - concerns about "getting into trouble" with any staff members for reporting bullying;
 - not having evidence to back up a bullying allegation;
 - not knowing how the matter will be dealt with by the school; and
 - not feeling fully confident in being believed.

12

More vulnerable pupils:

- While bullying can happen to any pupil, it is known that some may be more vulnerable to or at risk of experiencing bullying. Such vulnerable groups include pupils with disabilities or special needs, those from ethnic minority and migrant groups, pupils from the Traveller community, lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT+) pupils and those perceived to be LGBT+ and pupils of minority religious faiths.
- Some pupils with complex needs may lack understanding of social situations and therefore trust everyone implicitly. Such pupils may be more vulnerable because they do not have the same social skills or capacity as others to recognise and defend themselves against bullying behaviour.

Where does bullying happen?

- Bullying can happen anywhere at any time but there are certain times and places which particularly facilitate bullying.

Cyber-bullying:

- Access to technology means that cyberbullying can happen around the clock and the pupil's home may not even be a safe haven from such bullying.
- Pupils are increasingly communicating in ways that are often unknown to adults and free from

supervision. The nature of these technologies means digital content can be shared and seen by a very wide audience almost instantly and is almost impossible to delete permanently. While cyber bullying often takes place at home and at night, the impact can also be felt in school.

Areas of unstructured activity:

- Bullying in schools frequently takes place in the playground. School grounds with hidden or obscured parts may provide an environment conducive to bullying. Many common playground games present opportunities for bullying because of their physical nature. It is relatively easy to single out and bully another pupil. The noise level masks much of what is going on. The playground provides the opportunity for older pupils to pick on younger pupils. It can also be the setting for bullying by groups. Continuing provocation may eventually lead to a physical fight and ironically in some cases the person being bullied may appear to be the aggressor because they finally give vent to their frustration.
- Toilets, corridors, school hall and playgrounds may be the scene of verbal, psychological and physical bullying. The behaviour of pupils in those areas needs careful monitoring.

Bullying in the classroom:

- Bullying may also take place in class. It may occur subtly through glances, looks and sniggers but may take the more overt form of physical intimidation. It may also be exacerbated if a classroom atmosphere prevails whereby pupils are allowed to make derogatory comments about their classmates or other teachers.
- Teachers need to be alert to the underlying reasons for such comments in case pupils are trying to disclose something which is disturbing them and thus needs further investigation. Bullying may also occur during transitions throughout the day irrespective of whether the class or the teacher moves.

Coming to and from school:

- The area immediately outside the school, the local shops and local neighbourhood are often the scenes of bullying. Bullying can also take place at the bus-stop or on the journey to and from school whether the individuals are walking, cycling or on school buses.