

Curragh Post Primary School

Introduction and Scope of this Policy:

This document sets out the policy of Curragh Post Primary School in relation to promoting a school climate and culture that is safe and secure for students and free from bullying. **Accordingly, the Board of Management of Curragh Post Primary School adopts the Anti Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools issued by the Department of Education and Skills as the basis for the way our school community addresses how the issues of bullying and the persons involved will normally be dealt with.** This Policy is made available to school staff, published on the school website and made available to students, parents and guardians on request. The implementation of the school's Student Anti Bullying Policy is enhanced by the Student Code of Behaviour and other policies affecting student welfare.

Relationship to school's Mission / Vision / Aims:

Curragh Post Primary School's Mission Statement is as follows:

Our School values the gifts and talents of students and staff in their development in an atmosphere of equity, caring and mutual respect. Can we achieve this? Yes, we can. Is Feidir Linn.

This Student Anti Bullying Policy is informed by the school's Mission Statement which commits us to preparing all students for the challenges of adolescent and adult life and to respecting the dignity, worth and individuality of every member of the school community. The school's role in the development of young people supports and is enriched by the active participation of parents / guardians in all aspects of their childrens' lives.

Rationale:

This Student Anti Bullying Policy aims to ensure that appropriate opportunities and procedures are in place to enable the school

- to create a climate of security and support to all our students;
- to ensure that students understand the positive role they can play in creating an inclusive school community;
- to ensure that students understand what bullying is and the effects it can have on those involved in it;
- to ensure that students, as well as school staff and parents / guardians, understand the nature of bullying, the effects of it and how the school authorities will respond to allegations / incidents of bullying.

Goals:

The school shall have in place appropriate means and processes

- to inform students about bullying;
- to involve students in protecting each other against bullying;
- to inform staff and parents / guardians about bullying;
- to deepen the understanding of school staff in relation to their role in protecting students from bullying and dealing with allegations / incidents of bullying;
- to deepen the understanding of parents / guardians in relation to their role in protecting students from bullying and dealing with allegations / incidents of bullying.

Role of Parents / Guardians:

The school is a supportive organisation in respect of the primary educators – parents / guardians. Our efforts to provide holistic education, in its various forms, are most meaningful and effective when parents / guardians both understand and support our aims and activities. In the context of bullying, parents / guardians are asked to understand and support the work of school staff in their work to protect students, prevent bullying and, on occasion, respond to allegations / incidents of bullying.

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Bullying:

Definition: *Bullying consists of repeated and targeted inappropriate behaviour whether by word, by physical action or otherwise, directly or indirectly applied, by one or more persons against another person or persons which undermines the individual person's right to personal dignity. This definition includes cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying (such as homophobic bullying and racist bullying).*

Types of behaviour deemed to be inappropriate:

- Humiliation; including name-calling, reference to academic ability, etc.;
- Intimidation, including aggressive use of body language;
- Sexism, the unfair treatment of people because of their sex / gender;
- Verbal abuse, anonymous or otherwise;
- Physical abuse or threatened abuse;
- Aggressive or obscene language;
- Offensive joke, whether spoken or by email, text messaging, etc.;
- Bullying by email, text messaging, etc.;
- Victimization; including very personal remarks;
- Exclusion and isolation;
- Intrusion through interfering with personal possessions or locker;
- Threats, including demands for money;
- Reference to a person's sexual orientation;
- An attack by rumour, gossip, innuendo or ridicule on any individual's reputation.

Types of Bullying:

<u>Verbal</u>	<u>Physical</u>	<u>Intimidation</u>	<u>Extortion</u>
Lies	Pushing	Deliberate Isolation	Stealing
Slagging	Kicking	Aggressive Body Language	Demanding Money
Rumours	Messing	Silent Gestures	
Name Calling	Spitting	"The Look"	
Teasing	Assault	Making Noises	
Whispering		E-mails and Texts	
Put – Downs			
Abusive Language			
Reference to Physical appearance / body image, etc.			
Reference to Sporting Ability during P.E. / Games, etc.			
Verbal Abuse of Family Members			

Effects of Bullying:

On the Victim

Poor Concentration
Deteriorating Work
Fear of School
Loss of Confidence
Low Self-esteem
Substance Abuse
Aggression
School Dropout
Depression
Nervous Breakdown
Attempted Suicide

On the Bully

Unhappiness
Difficult Relationships
Isolation
Loneliness
Low Self-esteem
Guilt
Unpopularity
School / Workplace Problems

Signs and Symptoms of Bullying:

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Emotional

Unwillingness to go to school
Loss of interest and concentration in school
Sudden deterioration in performance
Unexplained changes in mood / behaviour
Sleep or Eating problems
Distress and Anxiety

Physical

Mitching
Reluctance / Refusal to discuss problems
Missing / damaged possessions
Increased requests for money
Unexplained cuts / bruises
Damaged clothing
Isolation among peers
Tendency to bully others

These signs and symptoms do not necessarily indicate bullying. However, if they recur and / or appear in combination, they should be reported for investigation.

Facts About Bullying Behaviour:

- Nobody is completely safe from bullying;
- Bullies can emerge at any age, at any stage of life, from any social background;
- Bullies are not always easily recognisable;
- Bullying causes pain and distress to victims;
- Bullying can be short-term or can continue over long periods;
- Bullies often cannot imagine how their victim feels;
- Bullies often think the victim deserves this treatment;
- Statistics show that bullies are more likely to become involved in crime;
- The bully is as much in need of help as the victim.

Statement on Bullying:

- Every person in the school community is entitled to respect and to be free of any type of bullying.
- The school will work proactively, as far as it can, to ensure that bullying does not take place.
- Reporting incidents of bullying is responsible behaviour.
- A record will be kept of all reported incidents of bullying.
- The matter will be dealt with seriously.
- The school has a programme of support for both the bully and the bullied.
- Appropriate action will be taken to ensure that it does not continue.

It is school policy to provide **education on bullying** in the following manner:

- All Junior Cycle classes are facilitated through the S.P.H.E. (Social, Personal and Health Education) programme which incorporates lessons about bullying.
- All Senior Cycle classes are facilitated through the Religious Education programme which incorporates lessons about bullying.
- Everyone is encouraged to participate in Friendship Week, which takes place on an annual basis.
- Positive reinforcement of behaviour for the better good of the school community is repeatedly encouraged by teachers.

The school has an excellent pastoral care system in place, and reports of all incidents (wherever they may have been reported), will be filtered through the Year Head, who is the primary person for pastoral care of the student in her / his year group.

Procedures for Noting and Reporting Incidents of Bullying:

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What should students do?

- Students should discuss any incident of bullying with a parent / guardian or teacher or another trusted adult within the school system; this is responsible behaviour rather than “telling tales”.

What should parents / guardians do?

- Parents / guardians should contact the Year Head / Principal in person regarding incidents of bullying behaviour which they might suspect or that have come to their attention through their children or other parents / guardians.

What should school staff do?

Allegations of / incidents of bullying behaviour which are drawn to the attention of a staff member will be dealt with in the following manner:

- The staff member who suspects that bullying may have taken place or is taking place and / or to whom an allegation has been reported should complete the attached “Bullying Report Form”.
- Where a staff member has been told of bullying, he / she should advise the person reporting the allegation / incident that he / she is obliged to complete the bullying report form and to pass it on to the school’s Guidance Counsellor. It should be explained that reporting is obligatory and that the matter will be dealt with by the “Student Support Group”.
- The “Bullying Report Form” should be handed to the school’s Guidance Counsellor in person. If the Guidance Counsellor is not readily available, the form should be handed to the Deputy Principal.
- The Guidance Counsellor, (and in the absence of the Guidance Counsellor, the Deputy Principal), will discuss the matter with the reporting staff member.
- He / she will, then, convene a meeting of the “Student Support Group” who will decide how to deal with the issues and person(s) allegedly involved.
- The “Student Support Group” consists of the Guidance Counsellor, Deputy Principal and Year Head (of the student involved). A valid meeting of this group requires two persons to be present.
- The “Student Support Group” will deal with the report – as a minimum, they are expected to inform the Principal that they are dealing with an allegation and how they intend to proceed. The Principal may advise a certain approach.
- As a minimum, they will be expected to nominate at least one of their members to speak to the alleged victim(s) and alleged perpetrator(s) separately.
- Where an allegation is substantiated, the alleged victim and alleged perpetrators of the incident will be spoken to and encouraged to solve the problem.
- If it is established by the “Student Support Group” that bullying has occurred, parents / guardians must be contacted and informed of the incident(s) and the school’s response to the matter..
- Where the incident is deemed to be minor, a verbal warning will be given to the bully to stop the inappropriate behaviour, pointing out how she / he is in breach of the Student Code of Behaviour and trying to get him / her to see the situation from the victim’s point of view.
- If the behaviour persists, the parents / guardians of the alleged victims and alleged bullies must be informed. Thus, they will be given the opportunity of discussing the matter and are in a position to help and support their children before a crisis occurs.
- Where parents / guardians are going to be consulted, the Principal should be informed in advance and invited to meet with parents / guardians when they come in.
- If there is a serious incident, perhaps repeated verbal assault or coercion, the matter should be reported by the “Student Support Group”, without delay, to the Principal, parents / guardians will be involved and appropriate sanctions applied by the Principal.

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- Where the incident is deemed to be more serious, (e.g. gross misbehaviour or physical assault), the Principal should be informed by the “Student Support Group”, immediately, and he / she may inform the Board of Management, the H.S.E., the Gardai, if necessary.
- At the end of the process, the Principal will speak to the person who made the initial report to a staff member and inform him / her in general terms how the matter has been dealt and acknowledge his / her wisdom in making the initial report.
- At the end of the process, the Principal will speak to the staff member who made the initial report to him / her and inform him / her in general terms how the matter has been dealt and acknowledge his / her wisdom in making the initial report.
- Throughout the process, the Year Head will be kept informed of all incidents and have access to relevant written records. Afterwards, the Year Head will monitor the progress of students involved in a bullying incident by liaising with the staff member and students involved (separately or jointly) at follow-up meetings.
- The incident will no longer be considered if there is no recurrence within that academic year.
- Where sanctions are involved, they will be based on the provisions made in the school’s Code of Behaviour and may include suspension or expulsion.
- The written record (i.e. completed report form and records of all meetings, interviews, etc.) will be kept in a secure location by the Principal for at least three years after the student(s) involved have left school. This report will not form part of the school’s normal student file.
- At every Board of Management meeting, the Principal will provide a report to the Board, setting out the number of confirmed bullying cases reported to the Principal and confirmation that all of these cases have been, or are being, dealt with in accordance with the school’s Student Anti-Bullying Policy and the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools.
- Annually, the Board of Management will review the school’s Student Anti-Bullying Policy and its implementation by the school. Written notification of this review will be published on the school website and on the Parents’ / Guardians’ Newsletter sent out to families of our students following the Board’s review.

Review Procedures:

The policy will be reviewed regularly and by the Board of Management every year. Any staff member who is unhappy with the content or the implementation of any school policy may request a review at any time and such a request will be dealt with as quickly as possible. The Students’ Council and / or Student Council may request a formal review at any time and such a request will be dealt with as quickly as possible by the Board of Management.

Adopted by Board of Management: February 2013

Amended by Board of Management: December 16th 2013

Review Date: November 2014

Bullying Report Form

Name of Initial Reporting Staff Member: _____

