

Anti-Bullying Policy



Revised 13.02.2025

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Scoil Chríost Rí Anti Bullying 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 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.

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3. **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
 - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
 - Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
 - Supports for staff;
 - Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
 - On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

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- Supports for staff;
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

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

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

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
- cyber-bullying and
- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

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

7. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:

The class teacher, support teacher and the teacher on duty (if the incident occurs in the yard) will investigate and deal with the incidents in the first incidence.

A meeting will take place to decide if the behaviours constituted bullying. Present at this meeting will be: the class teacher, support teacher and Special Needs Assistant (where applicable).

8. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:

- At school assemblies the principal reminds the children about the importance of including each other in games
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities
- Stay Safe Programme
- SPHE Programme
- Walk Tall Programme
- RSE Programme
- Anti-Bullying signs throughout the school (e.g. 'You must tell us about bullying so we can get it stopped')
- Staying Safe online (See accompanying Anti-Cyber Bullying Policy)

Scoil Chríost Rí

- Incredible Years Programme
- Acceptable Use Policy for internet use in the school
- Presentations by local Community Gardaí and other relevant personnel dealing with anti-bullying issues
- Information for Parents on Awareness and Prevention of Cyber Bullying
- The school's anti-bullying policy must be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association

9. The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:

Guidelines for the relevant teacher investigating alleged bullying in Scoil Chríost Rí:

1. The primary aim for the relevant teachers 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.
2. In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teachers will exercise their professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
3. Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.
4. Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
5. All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way.

Reporting bullying behaviour in Scoil Chríost Rí:

1. Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.
2. Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus drivers, caretakers, cleaners must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.
3. All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.

Scoil Chríost Rí

Recording bullying behaviour in Scoil Chríost Rí:

- a) Informal Note Taking – pre-determination that bullying has occurred
 1. All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them.
- b) Formal – determination that bullying has occurred
 1. When it is clear to the relevant teachers that an incidents of bullying has taken place this must be logged by the class teacher.
 2. Incidents of bullying which have not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days will be recorded by the class teacher and support teacher on the recording template (attached Appendix 3) and be filed in the principals office.

Following up with bullying behaviour in Scoil Chríost Rí:

1. When an incident of alleged bullying has been reported, the relevant teachers will hold an interview with the alleged bully and victim separately, seeking answers to open ended questions: what, where, when, who and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
2. Following this interview the teachers will exercise their professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best to resolve the situation.
3. If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first where possible. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements.
4. In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teachers that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken.
5. Where the relevant teachers has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts will be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.

6. 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. The pupil is asked to sign a contract or enter a promise that the bullying will stop.
7. Parents/guardians and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible.
8. Where a pupil has been found to be engaged in bullying behaviour, has formally promised to stop and has broken that promise, any of the following sanctions may be imposed:
 - (a) Pupil may be required to sign another promise, this time countersigned by a parent/guardian.
 - (b) Parent(s)/guardian(s) may be contacted by the 'Relevant Teachers' and informed of the nature and extent of the bullying behaviour with a view to agreeing a strategy whereby a promise to end the bullying behaviour would be honoured.
 - (c) Parent(s)/guardian(s) may be invited to a meeting with the 'Relevant Teachers' and the Principal and the pupil may be suspended from school.
 - (d) The case may be referred to the Board of Management and the pupil may be suspended from the school.
9. At least once every school term the Principal will provide a report to the BOM setting out the overall number of bullying cases reported by means of the recording template attached and confirmation that all cases are being dealt with in accordance with procedure.
10. Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the principal will agree to meet the parents as soon as possible and should the parents remain unsatisfied with the schools interventions they are referred to the Board of Management and thereafter the Ombudsman for Children.

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

Victims:

- 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 self-esteem.
- Circle Time
- A buddy system will be implemented where necessary.

Scoil Chríost Rí

- Where deemed necessary, the child in consultation with parents may be referred for counselling.

Bullies:

- Pupils who have engaged in bullying behaviour will also be constantly monitored by all staff.
- They will be afforded individual lessons to help them understand the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
- Where deemed necessary, the child in consultation with parents 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.

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.

The school will remind parents of the dangers of cyber- bullying which can happen with the use of social networking sites and mobile phones (see Cyber Bullying Policy attached). We also direct their attention to the school's internet Acceptable Use Policy (AUP).

11. 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.

12. Prevention of Harassment

The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of pupils or staff or the harassment of pupils or staff on any of the nine grounds specified i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

13. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 13.02.2025 [date].

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

Scoil Chríost Rí

15. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association . A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Update & Review:

Sarah Barnes (Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: 13.02.2025