PRESENTATION COLLEGE ATHENRY
Helping Students Achieve...Since 1908

PCA Anti Bullying Policy

Date of Review: January 2022

Signed:

Mary Molloy

Chairperson Board of Management

Date: 24/1/2022

Signed:

Principal

Date: 24/1/2022

PCA Anti Bullying Policy

Introduction

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 Presentation College Athenry 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. This policy was reviewed in 2021 and will be reviewed annually.

Objectives

- To raise awareness of bullying as an unacceptable form of behaviour.
- To create a safe environment for all members of our school community
- To raise awareness of our Anti-Bullying procedures

Key Principles

2. 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- (See Appendix 1)
    - 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 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). A bullying investigation will be automatically invoked following a written complaint.
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy by annual review. .

Definition

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 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 the misuse of social media
- 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 .

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

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

Investigating Personnel
4. The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:
- The Principal
- Deputy Principals
- All Year Heads

Any other teacher in the school who may have been aware or present of a bullying situation.

Prevention Strategies
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 :

Raising Awareness
- This will be achieved by displaying key points from the policy on digital signage.
- Anti-Bullying reporting google form will be displayed in school journals and on Year Head Assembly Google Classrooms to allow students to report instances of bullying. These will be monitored by Year Heads.
- The policy will be printed in school journals, in staff handbooks and will be made available on the school website for parents.
- Anti-Bullying lessons will be run in the first week of each term through the SPHE programme.
- Anti-Bullying weeks will be run through each school year as appropriate.
- Student Council mentoring.

As well as those areas mentioned above raising awareness is achieved in the following school related activities.

- **SPHE**: Anti-Bullying is a component of SPHE specifically to help students to build empathy, respect and resilience and enable students to develop a sense of self-worth. These classes provide initiatives and programmes focused on developing understanding and awareness of bullying and address identity-based bullying. Bystanders or "Silent Witnesses", are encouraged and supported through the programme to report incidents of bullying.

- **SPHE and Digital Citizenship Programme**: Students are taught using resources from Webwise, Google Digital Citizenship Course, Be in Ctrl initiative. These resources / ;lessons are reinforced with an in-person presentation from an external Web Safety professional - Jeremey Pagden. Students are equipped with the skills to protect themselves from cyber-bullying, and are taught how to manage themselves if they are a victim of cyberbullying.

- **Ladder of Referral**
  The ladder of referral and intervention in the school is as below:
  - Teachers
  - Year Head
  - Deputy Principal
  - Principal

- **Academic Monitor**
  - As part of the academic monitor's duties they will monitor academic progress and speak to students regarding issues or barriers for progress. These teachers provide support for student academic progress only but are part of the wider vigilance to combat bullying. While they are not expected to deal with discipline/ behavioural issues in general, these can be referred to the Year Head, who in turn uses the ladder of Referral

- **Compass Positive Behaviour System**
  - The Chronicle system emphasises issues and inter relationships between students. The Merit/ demerit system is also available for discipline issues if required.

- **Classroom Management**
  - The appropriate managing of classes is vital to provide a safe environment. Vigilance for any behaviour(s) that may be directed at individuals or groups is a key part of classroom management. This includes seating plans etc.

- **The Parents' Council:** Parents' Council organises information talks from time to time for parents on Anti-Bullying and Internet Safety.

- **Anti-Bullying Policy**: our policy is published on the PCA Student Intranet as well as our website and includes links to appropriate websites for information on bullying. Attention is drawn to this section of our website at Parent Information nights. The Anti-Bullying Policy is included on the agenda for start of year staff meetings. Review is facilitated regularly. The Compass School Documents section also provides information for parents through the MIS App.

- **Year Head Assemblies**: at all assemblies during the year the Year Head emphasises the need for mutual respect among all students. The attention of students is drawn to the school's

Anti-Bullying Policy. This message is reinforced by the Principal, Deputies, Year Heads and Class Teachers throughout the year.

- **Promoting Self Esteem**: Teachers are conscious of helping build the self-esteem of each student in their care. A student with high self-esteem is less likely to be bullied and if bullied will be better equipped to deal appropriately with the issue.

- **Agreed Classroom Rules:** discussion and agreement of the Classroom Rules involving teachers and students in the classroom at the beginning of the school year reinforces the importance of mutual respect between all members of the school community.
- **Digital Signage:** Raising awareness of anti bullying issues and making the ladder of referral visible for students.

- **Promoting wellness and good friendship**: Ideas and initiatives to promote wellness and good friendships are promoted and encouraged throughout the year. A wellbeing coordinator is in place in the post structure of the school.

- **Students with Special Education Needs**: with reference to students identified with Special Needs, it is the responsibility of each Year Head to differentiate and to make information on Anti-Bullying accessible.

Procedures
6. 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:

Procedures for noting and reporting incidents of bullying:
- All reports of bullying will be noted, investigated and dealt with by teachers.
- It will be made clear to pupils that reporting is the right option, that they will receive help and that they will be kept informed.
- When a teacher receives a report of bullying, an incident report form must be completed.
- The incident report form will be passed on to the Year Head who will collaborate with senior management and the Care Team
- Serious cases of bullying will be referred immediately to the Principal/Deputy Principals.
- In most cases the school will speak to the student(s) involved in the bullying issue before contacting parents. Members of the Care Team will discuss these incidents at the weekly meeting and put in place an action plan to assist all the students involved.
- In cases where it has been determined that bullying has occurred, parents/guardians will be informed at the earliest appropriate time so that they are given the opportunity to discuss the matter.
- Parents/guardians should report a suspected incident of bullying to the Year Head, counsellor, a deputy-principal or principal.
- Non -teaching staff such as special needs assistants, caretakers, secretaries, cleaning staff and supervisors are encouraged to report any incident of bullying witnessed by them.
- In the case of a complaint regarding a staff member, this will normally be dealt with by the Principal.
- In the case of a complaint regarding the Principal the matter will be dealt with by the Board of Management.
- Where cases remain unresolved at school level, the matter will be referred to the Board of Management.

Procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying:

- The investigating teachers(s) will be calm and objective. The matter will be dealt with outside the classroom to avoid humiliation to any party involved.
- The teacher(s) will speak separately to the pupils involved in an attempt to get both sides of the story. Interviews will be conducted with due regard to the rights of all involved.
- The teacher(s) will investigate the incident by seeking answers to questions of what, when, who and why. Factual notes will be kept at each stage of investigation.
- Pupils may be asked to write down their account of the incident.
- If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed separately.
- If it is concluded that a pupil has been involved in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him/her that he/she is in breach of the school's Code of Behaviour. The teacher will also try to get him/her to see the victim's position.
- Where a serious incident of bullying has been established, the teacher will present the Principal with a written record of the discussions with those involved.
- Sanctions will be imposed in line with the Code of Behaviour.
- Follow-up meetings may be arranged separately with the two parties with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the victim is ready and agreeable.
- If the behaviour is repeated the parents/guardians of both parties will be informed. They will be given the opportunity to discuss the matter and are in a position to help and support their children before a crisis occurs.
- Where cases remain unresolved at school level, the matter should be referred to the Board of Management.

Support Programme

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*) :
https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Anti-Bullying-Procedures-for-Primary-and-Post-Primary-Schools.pdf

School based supports for working with pupils affected by bullying

The school's programme of support for working with students affected by bullying will include interventions as follows:

Students who have been involved in bullying incidents will be advised by the Year Head of the availability of the Guidance Counsellor.

- The target of bullying may receive counselling and/ or opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise his/her self-esteem, to develop her friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed.

- The student involved in bullying behaviour will be referred to the Guidance Counsellor This will be an opportunity for him/her to learn other ways of meeting her needs without violating the rights of others.

Students who observe bullying behaviour are always encouraged to discuss it with a teacher. The assistance of the Guidance Counsellor may also be called upon if referred by the Year Head

A range of supports are as follows – this list is not exhaustive nor will all supports be suitable in some cases:

1. **Restorative Practice Model**: a relevant teacher / Year Head may or may not engage with those involved using this support structure. Using this approach will be at the discretion of the Year Head and take onto consideration the particulars of the case.

2. **Year Head** may engage with students involved in bullying incidents in a supportive role and also encourage students who observe bullying behaviour to report it. A relevant teacher may also check that the bullying behaviour has discontinued.

3. **SPHE** SPHE modules including Belonging and Integrating, Communication Skills, Friendship, Emotional Health and Influences and Decisions are important in dealing with the activity. These topics help students to learn coping strategies for dealing with bullying. The coping strategies applied give students an opportunity to develop their self-esteem, friendship and social skills along with feelings of self- worth. A student involved in bullying behaviour has an opportunity to reflect on their communication skills and how her behaviour impacts on other students.

4. **Guidance Counsellor** It is recognised that students affected by bullying or who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed. Students who engage in bullying behaviour may also need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others. These students may need ongoing assistance and may be referred to outside agencies/services as appropriate.

5. **Outside referrals** may be made to relevant professionals, when deemed appropriate, in consultation with parents.

6. **The Parents' Council** may also be a means of support by running workshops for parents to offer support and advice.**Websites**: links for support documentation are available on the school website

   <u>For students</u>
   - https://www.childline.ie/index.php/support/bullying/1395
   - https://www.hse.ie/eng/services/publications/children/cool%20school%20bullying%20project%20tips%20for%20teens.pdf

   <u>For parents</u>
   - https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/mental-health/what-to-do-if-you-are-being-bullied.html

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.

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.

Sanctions
Sanctions may include any or all of the following as appropriate:
- Verbal Warning
- Written Work
- Apology
- Community Service
- Detention
- Suspension
- Expulsion

N.B. This list is not exhaustive.

Awareness
This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website, 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.

Review
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, is readily accessible to parents and pupils on request 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.

End of Policy

Appendices

Appendix 1

Restorative Practice Process

Restorative Practices is a process to restore and build relationships. it puts the focus on repairing the harm that has been done. It is an approach to conflict resolution that includes all of the parties involved. It

The Restorative Practice concepts focuses on repairing harm done to people and relationships following a time of conflict. Restorative Practice involves bringing parties together in a circle with the aim of resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved rather than apportioning blame. It is worth noting that restorative practices do not preclude the applying of sanctions when and where appropriate.

Restorative Practices pursues two areas of exploration: one for addressing challenging behaviour, the other for addressing someone who has been harmed by another. Where two parties have mutually hurt each other, both sets of avenues of exploration may be drawn on interchangeably. Restorative questions are framed to allow separation of behaviour from the person's overall worth as a person. This allows them to admit their mistakes, take responsibility for righting their wrongs and be given an opportunity to change.

The use of restorative practices to address bullying behaviour serves the function of restoring and building relationships. It helps an offender to come to an understanding of the effect of the bullying behaviour and in promoting the expression of positive emotions, encourages them to make positive changes and to make up for any harm done. Similarly, restorative practice gives the person harmed an opportunity to express their feelings and to indicate the desire for bullying behaviour to stop. It supports the one harmed to express positive emotions and to request that bullying behaviour be stopped, thus empowering them and building self-esteem.
Restorative Practice may not be used in every situation of bullying encountered or of conflict.

Information Adapted from Hopkins, B. (2011) The Restorative Classroom; Using Restorative Approaches to Foster Effective Learning. London: Optimus Education and https://anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/

Appendix 2 Examples of bullying behaviours as identified by Anti Bullying Guidelines 2013

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-primary Schools.	
General behaviours which apply to all	• Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc. • Physical aggression • Damage to property • Name calling • Slagging • The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person • Offensive graffiti • Extortion • Intimidation • Insulting or offensive gestures • The "look" • Invasion of personal space • A combination of any of the types listed.
Cyber	• **Denigration**: Spreading rumours, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation • **Harassment**: Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual • **Impersonation**: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name • **Flaming**: Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight • **Trickery**: Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online • **Outing**: Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images • **Exclusion**: Purposefully excluding someone from an online group • **Cyber stalking**: Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety • Silent telephone/mobile phone call • Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls • Abusive text messages • Abusive email • Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/ Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles • Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures • Abusive posts on any form of communication technology
Identity Based Behaviours **Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation** (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).	

Homophobic and Transgender	- Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation - Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation - Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian...used in a derogatory manner - Physical intimidation or attacks - Threats

Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community	- Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background - Exclusion on the basis of any of the above
Relational	This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include: - Malicious gossip - Isolation & exclusion - Ignoring - Excluding from the group - Taking someone's friends away "Bitching" - Spreading rumours - Breaking confidence - Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear - The "look"
Sexual	- Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching - Harassment
Special Educational Needs, Disability	- Name calling - Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs - Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying - Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues. - Mimicking a person's disability - Setting others up for ridicule

PCA Template for recording bullying behaviour

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	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))*

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other	

5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern

6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) *

Physical Aggression		Cyber-bullying	
Damage to Property		Intimidation	
Isolation/Exclusion		Malicious Gossip	
Name Calling		Other (specify)	

7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

9. Details of actions taken

Signed_____(Relevant Teacher/ Year Head) Date _____

Date submitted to Year Head/ Deputy Principal/ Principal _____

Appendix 4

Advice for students experiencing / regarding Bullying

Tips for non cyber bullying issues:

1. If you are being bullied or you have witnessed bullying behaviour, you must **tell a teacher**. Most cases of bullying stop when the teacher is involved. Telling a teacher is responsible behaviour: it is NOT "telling tales/ grassing".
2. If you are being bullied, try to display confident body language and assertively **tell the bully to stop.**
3. It is a good idea to keep a written record/ diary of the bullying behaviour. **Record details** such as who, when, where, how often, what was said and if there were any witnesses. Produce this evidence to your Year Head.

Bearing in mind the serious nature of cyber- bullying, it is important that all students engage in responsible
behaviour when online. **Cyber-bullying is not an issue with technology solely; it's a behavioural issue.** Students should constantly question the impact that 'netiquette' (online behaviour) has on others. Students should also be aware of how to protect themselves from cyber-bullies. The following advice is offered:

1. **Save messages** and/or take a screenshot of an abusive message on your phone or computer.
2. **Keep passwords private**.
3. Choose **online friends** carefully.
4. Monitor the amount of personal information you post about yourself online. **Limit your personal exposure**. Be careful regarding Geotagging and location data shared with media files such as photos or videos.
5. **Do not reply** to abusive messages/ posts. Replying can lead to an escalation in cyber- bullying and lets the bully know that he/she is getting to you.
6. **Report the issue** to the mobile phone or website-company (if it is through call/ text).
    6.1. For detailed information on how to report violations on Facebook see
          https://www.facebook.com/help/?faq=247013378662696
    6.2. For detailed information on how to report violations on Facebook see and onTwitter see
          https://support.twitter.com/groups/33-report-a-violation/topics/122-reporting-violations/articles/15789-how-to-report-violations# .
7. For more advice and tips, see the following websites:
    7.1. http://www.thinkb4uclick.ie
    7.2. www.webwise.ie.

All links are correct as of 21st January 2022

Appendix 5

Advice for Parents regarding Bullying

1. Talk about bullying at home, and seek to ensure that your child understands that it is **wrong to bully**, or to be seen to support the bullying of another person. Standing by and doing nothing can very well be supporting bullying.
2. Prepare your child for a time when they might be the target for bullying behaviour. As part of this, explore some of the reasons why someone may bully others.
3. Highlight that **silence is the best friend of bullying** and, therefore, the importance that is attached to letting someone know.
4. Teach your child the **skills of assertiveness** by modelling it at home. A willingness to listen before judging, rather than being reactive, coupled with learning to use the word "I" is one of the secrets of assertive communication. For example, **"I want you to stop doing that"**. The assertive child will be able to: **stand tall; maintain eye contact; and express him/ herself clearly and calmly.**
5. **Build empathy** in your child, it has a key role to play in the prevention of bullying.
6. Remembering that no one is born with negative thoughts of themselves, work to raise your child's self- esteem. Recognise, praise and reward your child's effort as well as their successes. Give them responsibility; ask for their help and for their opinions. Take care that an emotional response to a situation doesn't lead to saying something to or about your child that criticises or belittles them.
7. A child's resilience and their sense of self- worth are closely aligned. Fostering **resilience** in your child will help them to deal well with negative situations.
8. Supporting your child in the development of **strong friendships** will also make them less vulnerable to bullying and rejection.
9. Encourage your child to participate in activities, sporting or otherwise, that have the capacity to provide opportunities for: personal achievement; confidence building; and the promotion of self-esteem and self discipline.
10. Help your child to be aware of **conflict resolution**.
11. Encourage your child to be a defender, to **help someone when they are down and unable to help themselves.**
12. Finally, one of the most important things that any parent can do in terms of countering bullying, is to become acquainted with the signs and symptoms that can emerge in children or young people if they are being bullied or if they are bullying others. This will support identification of a bullying problem and, therefore, early intervention. Some possible indicators that your child is being bullied include: unexplained bruises and cuts; unexplained damage to clothing; signs of anxiety and distress; changes in mood or behaviour; deterioration in academic performance; a reluctance to go to school; additional requests for money or stealing money; damage to or loss of personal belongings; negative reactions, such as getting upset, when online, coming offline or viewing text messages.

End of Document