



# **St. Colman's National School**

## **Clara Co. Kilkenny**

Email: [office.clarans@gmail.com](mailto:office.clarans@gmail.com)

Tel: 056 7759736

Web: [clarans.ie](http://clarans.ie)

Twitter: [@ClaraKilkenny](https://twitter.com/ClaraKilkenny)

### **Anti – Bullying Policy**





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## **School Profile**

**School Name:** St. Colman's N.S.

**School Address:** Clara, Co. Kilkenny

### **Context:**

St. Colman's N.S. is a rural, vertical primary school in the Catholic Diocese of Ossory. The staff consists of eight mainstream class teachers, two support teachers, an ASD class teacher, two special needs assistants and an administrative principal.

### **School Management:**

The Board of Management of St. Colman's N.S. is a statutory board appointed pursuant to the provision of the Education Act 1998

### **Mission Statement:**

St. Colman's N.S. aims to provide a happy, friendly environment where each child reaches his/her potential and will learn to co-exist in harmony with teachers, parents and fellow pupils.

The school encourages the philosophy of education basic to the two main principles and aims of primary education as stated in the primary school curriculum:

- A. To enable the child to live a full life as a child
- B. To equip him/her to avail of further education so that he/she may go on to live a full and useful life in society

### **Ethos**

Our School is a Catholic School and we share the responsibility of transmitting knowledge and attitudes that will enable the children to grow in our religious faith. Children from other religions and cultures are made equally welcome in our school.



## **Introduction**

### **1. Anti-Bullying Policy**

In accordance with the Education (Welfare Act), 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of St. Colman's N.S. 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. The Board of Management**

Here at St. Colman's N.S. we believe that our pupils have the right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment. If a school is well disciplined and organised, it can minimize the occurrences of bullying. St. Colman's has a clear ethos on the promotion of good citizenship and it is made clear that bullying is a form of anti-social behaviour.

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; 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); and
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy

### **3. Definition of Bullying (Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools)**

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

#### **4. Investigating and dealing with bullying**

The relevant teacher for investigating and dealing with bullying is the class teacher initially and the Principal teacher thereafter if necessary. In the absence of the Principal, the Deputy Principal will become the relevant person.

#### **5. Educational and Prevention Strategies**

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

- A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.
- The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.



- The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Pupils will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.
- Whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develops an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it-prevention and intervention.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extracurricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school. We will ensure that comprehensive supervision and monitoring measures are in place, to include incident, accident and welfare recording.
- Children are made aware that all forms of bullying is an unacceptable form of behaviour. This is done explicitly through the Stay Safe, Walk Tall and RSE programmes which are taught in our school (cf. SPHE plan)
- Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.

## **6. Procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying**

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:



- 1) The primary aim for the relevant teacher 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 (rather than to apportion blame);
- 2) In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
- 3) All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly;
- 4) Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners are expected to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;
- 5) Parents 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;
- 6) It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset;
- 7) Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents;
- 8) Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
- 9) 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;
- 10) When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should seek answers to questions such as:
  - What happened?
  - What were you thinking at the time?





- Who has been affected?
- In what way?
- What needs to be done to make things right?

11) This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a nonaggressive manner;

If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. 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;

12) Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher;

13) It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s);

14) In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved should 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 should give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils;

15) Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him how he is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;

16) It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his parents and the school;

17) Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable. This can have a therapeutic effect;



18) In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded by the relevant teacher in the recording template at Appendix 3.

19) In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:

- Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
- Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
- Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable; and
- Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the Principal or Deputy Principal;

20) Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures;

21) In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

## **7. Procedures for recording bullying behaviour**

The Board of Management must ensure that the school has clear procedures for the formal noting and reporting of bullying behaviour and these must be documented in the school's anti-bullying policy. All records must be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour must adhere to the following:

- 1) While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher will use his/her professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same;



- 2) If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- 3) The relevant teacher must use the recording template at Appendix 3 to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:
  - (a) 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; and
  - (b) where the school has decided as part of its anti-bullying policy that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

In each of the circumstances at (a) and (b) above, the recording template at **Appendix 3** must be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable. It should also be noted that the timeline for recording bullying behaviour in the recording template at **Appendix 3** does not in any way preclude the relevant teacher from consulting the Principal or Deputy Principal at an earlier stage in relation to a case.

## **8. The School's programme of support**

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying involves the following:

- ❖ Pupils who have been bullied will be provided with opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed. SPHE, Circle Time, P.E. Anti-Bullying Campaigns, Extra Curricular activities all allow for such opportunities
- ❖ The classroom teacher will liaise with the principal, deputy principal and where applicable, Special Education teacher and SNA, to provide informal counselling for pupils.



- ❖ Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the speedy identification of those responsible and speedy resolution of bullying situations
- ❖ Pupils involved in bullying behaviour need assistance on an on-going basis:  
As a school we will endeavour to
  - ❖ Make it clear that bullying pupils who reform are not blamed or punished and get a “clean sheet”
  - ❖ Make it clear that bullying pupils who reform are doing the right and honourable thing and giving them praise for this
  - ❖ Help 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
  - ❖ Deal with negative behaviour in general by encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child

Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their need without violating the rights of others.

Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour will be encouraged to discuss them with teachers.

## **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.



## **10. 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.

**11.** This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on: 05/10/2021.

**12.** This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Council. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills and the Patron if requested.

**13.** This policy and its implications 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' Council. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the Patron and the Department.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson, B.O.M.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal



## **Appendix 2 Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate**

The following are some practical tips for immediate actions that can be taken to help build a positive school culture & climate and to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour.

Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.

Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.

Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.

Catch them being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.

Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN.

Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.

Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.

Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.

Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use.

Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.

Actively involve parents and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media.

Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.

Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.

All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.

Ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.

School staff can get pupils to help them to identify bullying "hot spots" and "hot times" for bullying in the school.

- Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas, changing rooms, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision.
- Hot times again tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when pupils are in the playground/school yard or moving classrooms.
- Support the establishment and work of student councils.



### Appendix 3 Template for recording bullying behaviour

**1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupils engaged in bullying behaviour**

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**3. Source of bullying concern/report**

(tick relevant box(es))

Pupil Concerned	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

**4. Location of incidents**

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:**

<b>Homophobic</b>	
<b>Disability/SEN related</b>	
<b>Membership of Traveller Community</b>	
<b>Racist</b>	
<b>Other (specify)</b>	

**8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact**

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**9. Details of Actions taken**

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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_(Relevant Teacher)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date submitted to Principal / Deputy Principal: \_\_\_\_\_





## Appendix 4 Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation. The following checklist must be used for this purpose. The checklist is an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. In order to complete the checklist, an examination and review involving both quantitative and qualitative analysis, as appropriate across the various elements of the implementation of the school's anti-bullying policy will be required. Yes/No

Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools?	
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the Parents' Association?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to the school staff (including new staff)?	
Is the Board satisfied that school staff are sufficiently familiar with the policy and procedures to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy and procedures in their day to day work?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	
Has the Board discussed how well the school is handling all report of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and not therefore included in the Principal's periodic report to the Board?	
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	
Has the data available from cases reported to the Principal (by the bullying recording template been analysed to identify any issues or patterns in bullying behaviour?	
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that requires further improvement?	
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any area for improvement?	

