Anti-Bullying Policy

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 Caheragh 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.

1. Key Principles of Best Practice

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) 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;
  See Appendix 1 : Key elements of a positive school culture and climate
  See Appendix 2 : Practical tips for building a school culture and climate

(b) Effective leadership

(c) A school-wide approach

(d) A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact

(e) 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;

(f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils

(g) Supports for staff

(h) Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and

(i) On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

2. Definition of Bullying

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
- 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 dis-abilities 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.
Examples of bullying behaviours - For detailed definitions see Appendix 3

This policy applies to activities and events that take place:
- During school time (including break times)
- School tours/trips
- Extra-curricular activities

Caheragh N.S. reserves the right to take action against bullying perpetrated outside the school which spills over into the school

3. Who is responsible for what?
Anti- Bullying Coordinator : Mary-T MInehane, Principal.
Relevant Teachers
The relevant teacher is the class teacher and s/he is responsible for the investigation of any allegations of bullying. Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it. Any instance or allegation of bullying must be brought to the attention of the class teacher first.

4. Our Education & Prevention Strategies
The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyberbullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:

- We in Caheragh N.S. promote a positive school climate.
- Respect for all members of the school community is central to the ethos of our school.
- We promote the value of diversity in our school. We address issues of prejudice and stereotyping.
- Bullying behaviour is unacceptable and is not tolerated.
- We endeavour to develop the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities, both formally and informally.
- We promote whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff members develop an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it through prevention and intervention.
- We endeavour to raise awareness and provide training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parents and the wider school community.

- Adequate supervision is central to the prevention of bullying. Adequate supervision is provided in the classroom, school building and school grounds at all times – see Supervision Policy
- The Code of Behaviour and Anti Bullying policies will be made available to parents. School rules are given to new infants each year.
- Anti-bullying will be taught formally in all classes at least once per term.
- We teach the children the importance of tolerating others.
- At regular meetings, staff share information and identify vulnerable pupils who may be susceptible to being bullied.
- We encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. 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.
- We teach our pupils who to tell and how to tell
  o   Direct approach to a teacher or staff member at an appropriate time
  o   Hand note up with homework
  o   Make a phone call to the school or to a trusted teacher in the school
  o   Get a parent or friend to tell on your behalf
  o   Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place
- We encourage parents to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied.
- We implement an Acceptable Use Policy in our school. Access to technology within the school is strictly monitored. Pupils who abuse this privilege lose this privilege. Mobile phones are not allowed in school
- Our school receives support in implementing our anti bullying policy from :
  -    Local Garda Síochána & Community Garda
  -    NEPS/SCPA psychologists
  -    Child Welfare Department & Social Workers in Skibbereen Hospital
  -    CAMHS

Implementation of curricula
- The SPHE curriculum and the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes are taught in all classes.
- All class teachers will deliver lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes, e.g. Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme each term.
- Community Gardai will be invited to the school covering issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying
- The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.
- The school will implement the advice in "Sexual Orientation Advice for Schools" See Appendix D

5. **Our Procedures re Bullying Behaviour**

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:

The primary aim 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)

<u>**Reporting bullying behaviour**</u>

- Any pupil or parent may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated 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;

<u>**Investigating and dealing with incidents: Style of approach**</u>

- The relevant teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
- 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;
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.
- Where possible incidents should be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
- 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;
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should seek answers to questions of **what, where, when, who and why**.;
- If a group is involved, each member should, if possible, 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;
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after the interview by the teacher;
  It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident;
- 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.
- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the

school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;

- The code of behaviour will be invoked in circumstances where it is deemed prudent by the relevant teacher and school principal;
- **Where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school;**
- Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
- If a case remains unresolved, the matter will be referred to the Board of Management;
- In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Recording of bullying behaviour

The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

Informal- pre-determination that bullying has occurred
- All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. These will be recorded in a Bullying Incident Book kept by the relevant teacher.
- While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher must keep a written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same
- The relevant teacher must inform the principal of all incidents being investigated.

Formal Stage 1-determination that bullying has occurred
- 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.
- The relevant teacher will retain all records

Formal Stage 2-Appendix 3
The relevant teacher **must** use the recording template at Appendix 5 to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

a) in cases of serious bullying behaviour, the Principal will be notified immediately

- serious physical aggression

- cyber bullying

- serious damage to property

- malicious gossip

- significant instances of intimidation, isolation or exclusion

- any incident deemed serious enough by the relevant teacher

b) 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 recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal. These records will be retained by the Principal in a special sealed folder in the Principal's filing cabinet. Access to said records must be approved by the Anti Bullying Co-ordinator.

6. Programme of Support

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

- All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience e.g.
    - Pastoral care system
    - Buddy / Peer mentoring system
      - Group work such as circle time
      - Resource Time
      - NEPS support

- If pupils require counselling or further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.
- Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

7. Cyber Bullying

Cyber bullying includes (but is not limited to) communicating via electronic means with the objective of causing hurt, fear, embarrassment, humiliation, alarm and/or distress to one or more persons.
Cyber bullying includes the use of mobile phones and the internet with the objective of upsetting someone.
It may take the form of general insults or impersonation, defamation or prejudicebased bullying.
Unlike other forms of bullying a once-off posting can constitute bullying.

While this policy addresses issues related to cyber bullying of students (i.e. situations in which one or more students are the victim[s] of bullying), the policy also applies to teaching and other school staff.

Key Measures re Cyber Bullying

- The Anti-Bullying Coordinator will act as a Cyber-Safety Officer to oversee the practices and procedures outlined in this policy and monitor their effectiveness.
- Staff will be trained to identify signs of cyber bullying and will be helped to keep informed about the technologies that children commonly use.
- Advice will be communicated to help students protect themselves from being involved in bullying (as perpetrator or as victim) and to advise them on reporting any incidents.
- Students will be informed about cyber bullying in the course of their education at the school.
- Gardaí will continue to visit the school to talk about cyber bullying.
- Teachers will dedicate a standalone lesson to deal with the issue of cyber bullying.
- Parents will be invited to a talk on bullying to include cyber bullying.
- Students and staff are expected to comply with the school's policy on the use of computers in the school. (Acceptable Use policy)
- Parents will be provided with information and advice on cyber bullying.
- Parents and students are advised that it is **illegal** for a child under 13 to register with and use many social media networks, including Facebook, Instagram, and SnapChat.
- Caheragh N.S. endeavours to block access to inappropriate web sites, using firewalls, antivirus protection and filtering systems and no pupil is allowed to work on the Internet within the school without a member of staff present.

8. 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.
See Supervision Policy & Acceptable Use Policy

9. 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.

10. Date Policy Adopted

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 8th November 2016.

11. Availability of Policy

This policy has been made available to school personnel, is readily accessible to parents and pupils (on request) A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

12. Review

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel and will be readily accessible to parents and pupils (on request) A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: _____   Signed:
_____

           (Chairperson of BoM)   (Principal)

Date: _____   Date:
_____

Appendix 1

Key Elements of a Positive School Culture & Climate

- The school acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment.
- The school acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual and his/her worth as a human being.
- The school promotes positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among all its members.
- The school prohibits vulgar, offensive, sectarian or other aggressive behaviour or language by any of its members.
- The school has a clear commitment to promoting equity in general and gender equity in particular in all aspects of it's functioning.
- The school has the capacity to change in response to pupils' needs.

- The school identifies aspects of curriculum through which positive and lasting influences can be exerted towards forming pupils' attitudes and values.

- The school takes particular care of "at risk" pupils and uses its monitoring systems to facilitate early intervention where necessary and it responds to the needs, fears or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner.

- The school recognises the need to work in partnership with and keep parents informed on procedures to improve relationships on a school-wide basis.

- The school recognises the role of parents in equipping the pupil with a range of life-skills.

- The school recognises the role of other community agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying.

- The school promotes habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the interdependence of people in groups and communities.

- The school promotes qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among all its members both in school and out of school.

- Staff members share a collegiate responsibility, under the direction of the Principal, to act in preventing bullying/aggressive behaviour by any member of the school community.

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 and 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 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, hallways 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.

Appendix 3

Examples of bullying behaviours

General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying	- 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
	This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying.

	Behaviours include:
Relational	- 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" - Use or terminology such as 'nerd' in a derogatory way
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

Appendix 4
SEXUAL ORIENTATION – ADVICE FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS

GENERAL POINTS

• Schools can foster a culture that is accepting of difference. This can be expressed where appropriate, rather than making the assumption that everyone understands it.

• An integral part of RSE is learning to respect others; this will include respect for families or individuals who are different from the norm.

• The Equal Status Acts 2000 and 2004 provide protection against discrimination on nine grounds, one of which is sexual orientation. The Acts oblige those who manage schools to protect students and staff from discrimination or sexual harassment.

• If children are using the word 'gay' in a negative fashion it is better not to ignore it in the hope that it will go away. The same advice would apply for any instance of bullying.

• Schools are advised to develop a strategy for responding to children who have questions about sexual orientation or who are taunting others about being gay. This should be done in the context of the school's ethos and RSE policy and with the awareness that primary school children are probably too young to engage in any detailed discussion of sexual identity.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

• Depending on the context and the age group of the children, the teacher could ask a child or a class group what they mean by the word 'gay'

• We as a staff will address such situations with the following agreed responses: In the younger classes, the teacher should say 'We ask that people are called by their proper names'.

In the older classes, the teacher should say 'The majority of people are attracted to people of the opposite sex. This is called being heterosexual. Some people are attracted to people of the same sex. This is called being homosexual or gay.'

• To give factual information like this in an open and straightforward way may help to remove the secrecy which is necessary for any bullying to flourish.

• Homophobic insults should be treated in exactly the same way as racist or other insults – the teacher can calmly explain to the child that such insults are hurtful to the other person and are not acceptable.

• Schools promote a culture of communication which actively discourages abusive name calling