A.34 (ii)   ANTI-CYBERBULLYING POLICY

1 Introductory Statement

This Anti-Cyberbullying Policy is an expanded expression of the policies contained in the Anti-Bullying Policy of Coláiste an Spioraid Naoimh and should be read in conjunction with that document. In the event of inconsistency or contradiction between this document and the Anti-Bullying Policy of Coláiste an Spioraid Naoimh, the Anti-Bullying Policy of Coláiste an Spioraid Naoimh will have precedence.

2 Scope of this Policy

This policy applies to the whole school community in their relationships with each other – students, teachers, management, board of management, parents, office and all ancillary staff. While this policy addresses issues related to cyberbullying of students (i.e. situations in which one or more students are the victim(s) of cyberbullying), the policy applies to teaching and other school staff, parents/guardians, and others insofar as measures under the policy relate to them. It is important that all members of the school community are aware that cyberbullying is unacceptable and should not be tolerated.

3 Rationale for this Policy

(a) The Department of Education and Skills requires schools to have a written policy on bullying.

(b) Schools also have obligations under the Equal Status Acts, 2000, which relates to discrimination based on nine grounds: gender, marital status, family status, age, race, religion, disability, sexual orientation, membership of the traveller community.

(c) Our Trustees, the Presentation Brothers Schools Trust (PBST), have a statutory obligation to ensure that a policy is in place that reflects the principles and values of the religious and educational philosophy of the school.

(d) Involving and encouraging all members of the school community in developing, formulating and reviewing this policy on cyberbullying promotes partnership, ownership and implementation of a living policy.

4 Relationship of this Policy to the Mission Statement of the School

This policy is consistent with the Mission Statement of Coláiste an Spioraid Naoimh which states the following:
Coláiste an Spioraid Naoimh is a Catholic school, which seeks to create a caring environment in which Christian values permeate all aspects of school life and teachers and pupils find fulfilment.

5 Objectives of this Policy

5.1 General Goals

(a) To fulfil our mission commitment as outlined in the previous paragraph.

(b) To promote each student's right to enjoy his learning and leisure free from cyberbullying, both in the school and while engaged in school-related activities.

(c) To ensure every member of staff has the right to enjoy his/her work and association with Colaiste an Spioriad Naoimh.

(d) To enable students and staff alike to support each other by reporting all instances of cyberbullying. We will endeavour to be a school where responsible reporting is the norm.

(e) To offer help, advice and support to victims of cyberbullying.

(f) To confront perpetrators of cyberbullying and give them realistic, firm and consistent guidelines to help control their behaviour.

(g) To work with, and through, the various local agencies in countering all forms of cyberbullying.

(h)   To reduce/curtail the incidence of cyberbullying through education and adherence to this the procedures outlined in this policy.

5.2 When will the policy apply?

This policy applies throughout the school year, for all school activities, both in the building and in the grounds of Colaiste an Spioriad Naoimh, and anywhere our students are under supervision of staff (trips, tours, sports outings, etc). It should also be kept in mind that the school may take a view upon any items published, by any means, if those items could bring the name of the school into disrepute. This is not confined to term-time only. This policy applies even when a student engages in inappropriate use of social media, when not under the direct supervision of the school; when there is a clear connection with the school, and/or a demonstrable impact on its aims, work reputation and/or personnel (both student and staff).

REVIEW · DESIGN · IMPLEMENTATION · EVALUATION

5.3 Where will the policy apply?

The school draws a distinction between incidents which originate from within the school environs and those which occur outside. While the same standards apply at all times and in all places, it needs to be recognised that the school cannot be held responsible for students' actions when not on the premises. The school does however reserve the right to act on incidents of cyberbullying perpetrated by students from the school even when the incident originates outside of school and outside of regular school hours. The school takes seriously the responsibility of regularly informing students about internet protocol and best practice in the area of internet usage, including the concept of "public domain". The school values parents' support in reinforcing best practice in this area. Any cyberbullying incident involving a student, current or recent past, as perpetrator or victim, is of concern, but especially when both perpetrator and victim are students, current or recent past. Equally, social comment about a member of staff which falls under the categories listed above will not be tolerated.

6 Explanations

6.1 Definition of cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is defined as using Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), including mobile phones (calls, text messages, group messaging services, instant messaging etc.), personal website, online personal polling websites, social network sites, internet, email, digital media etc to demean, humiliate, exclude, or otherwise undervalue or upset another person through direct or indirect methods. It can be an extension of facetoface bullying, with technology providing the bully with another route to harass their target. In many ways features of cyberbullying replicate aspects of bullying behaviour. However, it does differ in several significant ways from other types of bullying: the potential invasion of home and personal space, the difficulty in controlling electronically circulated messages, the potential size of the audience and the perceived anonymity which is often involved. Due to the instant, public, open and potentially permanent nature of access to material posted on social media and its capacity to multiply exponentially, a single inappropriate and offensive posting may constitute cyberbullying.

6.2 Examples of cyberbullying

(a) threats and intimidations,
(b) harassments or 'cyberstalking'
(e.g. repeatedly sending unwanted texts, instant messages or emails),
(c) vilification / defamation, ("flaming")
(d) exclusion or peer rejection,
(e) impersonation ("masquerading")
(f) unauthorised publication of private/personal information or images ("outing")
(g) sending videos/pictures to humiliate or hurt someone or cause offence

(h) circulating or publishing material recorded without consent, where such material is likely to cause offence or embarrassment to the person being recorded.

6.3 Examples of media used in cyberbullying

(a) Mobile phones
(b) Instant Messenger and Voice over Internet Protocols
(c) Chat rooms and message boards
(d) Email
(e) Webcam
(f) Social networking sites eg Facebook
(g) Video hosting sites
(h) Virtual learning environments
(i) Gaming sites, consoles and virtual worlds
(j) Blogs and Wikis

6.4 Differences between cyberbullying and other forms of bullying behaviour

(a) Impact: the scale and scope of cyberbullying can be greater than other forms of bullying.
(b) Targets and perpetrators: the people involved may have a different profile from traditional bullies and their targets.
(c) Location: cyberbullying may take place anytime and, given the nature of electronic communication, its effects may be felt in any location.
(d) Anonymity: the person being bullied will not always know who is attacking them.
(e) Evidence: unlike some other forms of bullying, the target of the bullying is likely to have evidence of its occurrence.
(f) Cyberbullying may be particularly difficult to avoid/ignore owing to its 24/7 multi-location nature.

6.5 Education on the impact of Cyberbullying

(a) Education on cyberbullying is an important part of the Social Personal & Health Education (SPHE) programme, and may also be dealt with in the Civic Social & Political Education (CSPE) programme, in the senior Religion programme and in Computer Studies. Awareness of cyberbullying and bullying in general is also covered in the Transition Year (TY) programme. The benefits of availing of outside expertise, when available and appropriate, to highlight the issue of cyberbullying to pupils, parents and staff is also recognised.
(b) Some cyberbullying is clearly deliberate and aggressive, but it is important to recognise that some incidents of cyberbullying may well be unintentional and the result of simply not thinking about the consequences.

REVIEW · DESIGN · IMPLEMENTATION · EVALUATION

(c) What may be sent as a joke may not be received as one, and indeed the distance that technology allows communication means the sender may not see the impact of the message on the receiver. There is also less opportunity for either party to resolve any misunderstanding or to feel empathy. Students need to be aware of the effects of their actions.

(d) In many cases of cyberbullying, bystanders can easily become perpetrators, e.g. by passing on or showing to others images designed to humiliate, or by taking part in online polls or discussion groups. Such people may not recognise themselves as participating in bullying, but their involvement has the potential to compound the unhappiness for the person being targeted.

(e) 'Bystanders' or 'accessories' who actively support cyberbullying are liable to face sanctions themselves. Pupils who become involved in this respect need to be aware that their actions may have severe and distressing consequences, and that participating in such activity will not be tolerated. A distinction will be made, however, between bystanders/accessories who actively support cyberbullying and bystanders/accessories who feel unable to act/report owing to feeling fearful or intimidated.

7 Key Measures

7.1 Advice to students

(a) Respect other people. Remember that when you send a message to someone, you cannot see the impact that your words or images may have on the other person. That is why it is important to always show respect to people and be careful what you say online or what images you send. What you think is a joke may really hurt someone else. Always ask permission before you take a photo of someone. Please bear in mind that (except with the expressed permission of a teacher) the use of the camera or video component is strictly prohibited in Coláiste an Spioraid Naoimh. Breaches of this rule will (depending on the gravity of the situation) be subject to sanction up to and including detention, suspension and expulsion.

(b) If you receive a rude or offensive message or picture about someone else, do not forward it. You could be assisting a bully and even yourself be accused of cyberbullying.
You could also be breaking the law.

(c) Think first before you send. It is important to think before you send any images or text about yourself or someone else by email or mobile phone, or before you post information on a website. Remember that what you send can be made public very quickly and could stay online forever. Parents, teachers, friends or future employers may be able to access photos in years to come.

(d) Protect your password. It is good practice to change your password on a regular basis and not to disclose it to other people. Choosing hardtoguess passwords with symbols or numbers will help stop people hacking into your account and pretending to be you. It is also sensible to give your mobile phone number only to trusted friends.

(e) Block the bully. Most responsible websites and services allow you to block or report someone who is behaving badly.

(f) Don't retaliate or reply. Replying to bullying messages, particularly in anger, may well be what the bully wants and can easily escalate matters very quickly.

(g) Save the evidence. It is important to keep records of offending messages, pictures or online conversations. If you are intending to make a complaint, they will help you demonstrate what is happening and can be used by the school, Internet service provider, mobile phone company, or even the Gardai to investigate the cyberbullying.

(h) Make sure you report incidents of cyberbullying. You have the right not to be harassed and/or bullied online and you should report incidents of cyberbullying which take place.

8 Links to Other Policies

The Anti-cyberbullying Policy of Colaiste an Spioriad Naoimh outlines in detail provisions contained in the AntiBullying Policy and the school's Code of Behaviour. Other relevant policies include the Child Protection Policy, the Drugs, Tobacco and Alcohol Policy, and the Internet Acceptable Use Policy (which is a component part of the ICT Policy).

9 Implementation Arrangements, Roles and Responsibilities

9.1 Procedures for Noting and Reporting Incidents of Cyberbullying:

If a student receives an abusive email or text (or any other form of unacceptable electronic communication) from another student, he should report the matter to a member of staff (usually his class teacher) as soon as possible. A copy of the communiaction with full headers, plus dates and times, should be saved wherever possible.

First **steps in the investigation**: The alleged victim and the alleged perpetrators of the incident (along with other students who may be able to assist in the investigation of the incident) will be spoken to by the relevant teacher(s) and encouraged and facilitated to solve the problem. When adjudged necessary, written statements may be sought form the parties involved.

A written **record**: In cases where the relevant teacher finds that bullying has taken place, the standard CSN Bullying Report Forms (Forms A and B) will always be completed by the relevant teacher. A copy of the Bullying Report Form will be kept in the Student File of both/all parties and in the Class File. Any written statements may be attached to the Forms. In cases where an allegation of bullying has not been substantiated, the completion of the standard CSN Bullying Report Forms (Forms A and B) will not be compulsory though it would generally be regarded as good practice.

Focus **will be on resolution rather than blame**: The primary aim in investigating and dealing with the bullying incident will to resolve any issues and to restore as far as is practicable the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame). In some circumstances, the pupil or pupils concerned will have access to a school guidance counsellor.

Parents will **be contacted**: In any case where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the parents of the parties involved will be contacted to inform them of the matter and the actions being taken will be explained to them.

Situation will **will be monitored for 20 school days**: The relevant teacher will monitor the situation for 20 school days. In most cases, it is expected that this will be the end of the matter.

Use of **DES Standard Template for recording Bullying Behaviour**: In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 days after the bullying behaviour occurred, the relevant teacher must record the bullying behaviour using the DES standard *Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour* and a copy provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal. **Note**: The *Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour* should also be completed immediately and a copy provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal in cases where the relevant teacher adjudges the bullying behaviour to be particularly serious.

9.2 Sanctions

A. The aim of a sanction is to:
(a) Help the person harmed to feel safe again and be assured that the bullying will stop.
(b) Hold the perpetrator to account by getting him to recognise the harm caused and to deter him from repeating the behaviour.
(c) Demonstrate to the school community that cyberbullying is unacceptable and that the school has effective ways of dealing with it, so deterring others from behaving similarly.

B Sanctions may include:
i. A contract of good behaviour
ii. School community service
iii. Withdrawal of privileges
iv. Written work (focusing on the behaviour, where appropriate)
v. Detention
vi. Other sanctions as may be deemed appropriate
vii. Suspension
viii. Expulsion

Note 1: The seriousness of the violation will determine the sanction to be applied.
Note 2: Offenders and victims of bullying may be referred to counselling.
Note 3: Offenders found to have falsely accused another member of the school community of an act of cyberbullying will also be subject to the sanctions listed above.
Note 4: In circumstances where an investigation of cyberbullying is not proven but the school management is satisfied that a genuine and reasonable complaint has been made, no action will be taken against the complainant.

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9.3 Roles and Responsibilities

The school management team is responsible for ensuring that this policy is implemented. It is the responsibility of all members of the community to take action if they are aware of cyberbullying taking place; to remain silent could be seen as condoning the action of the bully.

9.4 Success Criteria
The success of this anti-cyberbullying policy will be evident in the wellbeing and happiness of the whole school community as reflected in fewer incidents of cyberbullying behaviour being encountered.

10 Drafting

This Anti-cyberbullying Policy was originally drafted by the Principal between December 2012 and April 2013 and draws on templates provided by the National Association of Principals and Deputy-Principals (NAPD) and by a number of other schools. It was drafted following an extended period of consultation with members of the staff anti-bullying work-group, members of the Parents' Association, members of the Student Council and members of the Board of Management. It was redrafted in March 2014 to bring it into compliance with the new Anti-Bullying DES Procedures and re-approved by the Board of Management following a review in June 2016.

11 Ratification and Implementation Date

This policy is an expanded expression of the policies contained in the Anti-Bullying Policy of Coláiste an Spioraid Naoimh and is subservient to the provisions of that policy. The Anti-Bullying Policy of Coláiste an Spioraid Naoimh is reviewed annually by the Board of Management.

12 Monitoring the Implementation of the Policy

All members of staff will be involved in monitoring the implementation of this policy.

13 Reviewing the Policy
It is envisaged that, as is the case with all school policies, there will be a periodic review of this Anti-cyberbullying Policy.