Anti-Bullying Policy

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of Rathcormac NS 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 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.

(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.

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

- 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. (See Appendix 1)*

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

- Principal

- Deputy Principal

- All class teachers

- Relevant teacher is a teacher that witnesses bullying or to whom bullying is reported. The teacher on yard is the relevant teacher.

Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying, homophobic, and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows (see Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

Education and prevention Strategies

School-wide approach
- 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.

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- 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.
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s), and the wider school community.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra- curricular 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.
- Involvement of the student council in contributing to a safe school environment e.g., Lunchtime Friendship Squad and other student support activities that can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- The Code of Behaviour and antibullying policies are available on our website. www.rathcormacns.ie
- 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.
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.:
    - Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
    - Hand note up with homework.
    - Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
    - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Clear protocols to encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied.
- Implementation of the schools Acceptable Use Policy in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored, and the pupils' use of mobile phones is strictly prohibited.

Implementation of curricula
- The full implementation of the SPHE curriculum and the RSE and Stay Safe and Walk Tall Programmes.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence-based programmes, e.g. Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme,
- 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.
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Links to other policies
School policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to bullying, e.g. Code of Behaviour, Child safeguarding and risk assessment, Supervision of pupils, Acceptable Use policy, Attendance Strategy,

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
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).

The school's procedures must be consistent with the following approach.
Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s)) understand this approach from the outset.

Reporting bullying behaviour

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.
- All reports will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), the caretaker must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

Investigating and dealing with incidents: Style of approach

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the (relevant)teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) 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 be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved may meet as a group. Should a group meeting take place, each member of the group should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements.

- It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s)
- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy). The school should give parent(s)/guardian(s) an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the pupils.
- 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 and the impact the bullying behaviour has had.
- It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parent(s)/guardian(s)) that in any situation 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.

Follow up and recording.

- 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.
  - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardian(s)s or the school Principal or Deputy Principal
- 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.
- Where a parent(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.

Recording of bullying behaviour

It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner.

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

- All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them including the actions taken and any discussions with those involved.
- The relevant teacher must inform the principal of all incidents being investigated.

The relevant teacher will use the recording template at Appendix 2. The recording template will be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal. These reports will be stored in secure filing cabinets.

Established intervention strategies.
- Teacher interviews with all pupils
- Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process.
- Working with parent(s)/guardian(s)s to support school interventions.
- No Blame Approach
- Circle Time
- Restorative interviews

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows
- The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying involves discussing the incident with the pupils, reassuring them that they are right to bring the event to the attention of staff, that they were not telling tales and their actions will help others, they will be reminded that they should tell again if they have any new concerns.
- The teacher(s) involved, and the principal will check from time to time with the child that everything is ok.
- Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

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.

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. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 20th February 2024].

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website www.rathcormacns.ie and provided to the Parents' Association A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

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

Signed: _____
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _Geraldine Connell_____
(Principal)

Date: _20th February 2024.___

Date of next review: _____

Appendix 1: Examples of Bullying behaviours

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 rumors, 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

Appendix 2 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	
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) Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____