Antibullying Policy

Chairperson of Board of Management ....

Principal ....

Date................................... 28 / 09/ 2023

Review Date .... Sept 2024

Ethos Statement

Mayo Sligo & Leitrim ETB is a community of learners with an historic and unique tradition as a provider of education and training. In responding to the needs of the community it delivers the highest standards of teaching and learning.

Mayo Sligo & Leitrim ETB Colleges, Schools and Centres of Education are democratic, co-educational and multi-denominational in character where policies, practices and attitudes are underpinned by the core values of Respect, Equity and Fairness.

Link to Mission statement

Coláiste Iascaigh in conjunction with its education partners is committed to providing an environment where each student is cherished equally and is nurtured to a personal, intellectual and moral maturity.

The Anti-Bullying Policy helps to set the standards that the school community aspires to; students and staff work together to continue to develop the school and maintain an atmosphere in which all individuals feel safe.

Scope of policy:

This policy applies to the whole school community in their relationships with students – students, teachers, Board of Management, parents and all ancillary staff.

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 Coláiste Iascaigh 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 students or staff 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 students and staff 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 students;
    - Explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying;
    - including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- Effective supervision and monitoring of students.
- Supports for staff.
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies).
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

We aspire to fulfil this commitment by fostering an atmosphere of respect, understanding, and encouragement between all who teach, work and learn in the School, so that the development and contribution of every individual can be acknowledged, and all can work together to benefit personal growth and the common good.

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*.

4. To whom should concerns about a student being bullied be reported – relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying?

Students, parents, non-teaching staff or members of the wider community should feel welcome to report their concerns to **any member of the teaching staff** -including the Principal or Deputy Principal. In the context of Section 6.8.3 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools the **relevant person for investigating and dealing with bullying is:**

Principal or Deputy Principal

But 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 and identity-based bullying including in particular, 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*):

The prevention and awareness of bullying is integral to this policy and students will, through both their curricular and extra-curricular programmes, be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth. The focus of Coláiste Iascaigh's prevention strategy will be to build empathy, respect and resilience in students.

- Full implementation of the SPHE, RSE and CSPE programmes and curricula to ensure that school culture supports a safe social and personal environment. These programmes provide opportunities to build self-esteem and resilience in order to help young people more effectively deal with bullying. Students will be provided with opportunities to understand the causes and effects of bullying, the issue of identity-based bullying and in particular homophobic and trans-phobic bullying. Staff delivering these programmes will attend in-service training.

- All first years receive lessons on bullying including cyber bullying and Internet safety through our Transfer and Induction Programme.

- Prevention and awareness raising measures will also deal explicitly with cyber- bullying through educating students about appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while on-line and also through developing a culture of reporting any concerns about or incidents of bullying to a member of the teaching staff.

- The School will, in all its communications with students and their parents, commencing with the induction of the student into the school, make every effort to highlight the importance of students reporting incidents of or concerns about bullying to a member of the teaching staff on the clear understanding that these matters are being reported in confidence. This means that a student who draws concerns about bullying to the attention of a member of staff will not have his/her identity divulged in any way that might result in those against whom allegations are being made identifying the source of the report. More than anything else, the combating of bullying will depend on the extent to which students note and report bullying. In this context, the well-being of students is very much dependent on the vigilance of their fellow students and their preparedness to report concerns about bullying to the teaching staff and/or school management. All teaching staff will reinforce this point to students on an ongoing basis.

- The School will hold an annual information evening for parents on Internet Safety for their child. The evening will provide parents with reliable information on how they may contribute towards combating bullying. In this regard, it is important that parents realise that anyone can be a bully and anyone can be a target of bullying. It is not just other people's sons and daughters that can

bully. It is important to realise that disagreements between young people are part and parcel of negotiating the road to adulthood and that every youthful disagreement should not be treated as a full-blown bullying episode. In accordance with 6.8.9 of the DES Procedures 'parents and students are expected 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'.

- All students will become familiar with the Anti-bullying policy through tutor meetings, it will be published on the school website and the school app which must be signed by both student and parent to acknowledge that they have read and understand the policy.

- Promotion of the schools Anti-bullying Charter in student journals and displayed in all classrooms.

- Annual Anti-Bullying week. The aim of the week is to raise awareness around anti-bullying. We will actively promote the school anti-bullying policy and anti-bullying charter and encourage active discussion of its contents. This will be encouraged through poster competitions and peer delivered presentations to students. The message which will be delivered in the school is BULLYING IS DELIBERATE, REPEATED HURTFUL BEHAVIOUR-If you see it don't support it-RECOGNISE IT, REJECT IT, REPORT IT

- 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.

- Ensuring all students know who to tell and how to tell-encourage a 'telling' school. Students will be reminded through tutor meetings.

- Encouragement of the student council to become involved in contributing to a safe school environment. Buddy/Mentor activities can help to support 1st Year students transition confidently, and encourage a culture of peer support.

- The School will devote a staff development session towards: raising the awareness of bullying among staff, building an understanding of what bullying is and providing guidance on how it is best combated –prevented, detected, investigated, documented (as appropriate) and resolved. This session will also provide opportunities for exploring the potential that exists within the teaching of all subjects and within extracurricular activities to foster an attitude of respect for all, to promote the value of diversity, to address prejudice and stereotyping, and to highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour. A clear focus of all staff development around combating bullying will be the enablement of all staff to implement this policy and the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools consistently and effectively.

- The School is committed to surveying the student body regularly to identify the extent of bullying and, in so far as is possible, the students that are affected by it.

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 (see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools)

Those involved in investigating and resolving bullying behaviour will note and report developments as follows and, in doing so, they will comply with relevant data protection legislation.

•The relevant teacher will use his/her professional judgement regarding the records to be kept of information received, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved with the bullying behaviour.

•Where the relevant teacher establishes that bullying has occurred, s/he must keep appropriate written records to assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

•The relevant teacher must use the recording template at Appendix 1 to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

a) Where s/he considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after s/he has determined that bullying behaviour occurred; and

b) Where it is necessary to report serious bullying behaviour immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal or where a relevant teacher at any time passes on concerns or allegations of bullying to the Principal or Deputy Principal.

In each of the circumstances above, the recording template at Appendix 1 must be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable. At any point in either investigating or resolving a bullying matter, the relevant teacher may seek the advice and support of the Principal and/or Deputy Principal while retaining responsibility for dealing with the matter.

Also, at any point in either investigating or resolving a bullying matter, the relevant teacher may hand the matter over to either the Principal or Deputy Principal. In doing so, however, s/he must complete the recording template at Appendix 1, retain a copy of the completed template in his/her files and provide a copy to the Principal or Deputy Principal, as applicable.

- In investigating bullying behaviour or addressing bullying behaviour in any way, teachers are welcome to seek the assistance and support of the principal, the deputy principal or the pastoral

care team at any time. Indeed, given the extent to which the principal and deputy principal are privy to all kinds of personal information about students, it would be prudent for teachers to check in with either of them before taking any action in relation to bullying behaviour.

- Where a teacher is concerned that a particular bullying episode is causing serious upset to a student, staff member or other person, s/he should bring it to the attention of either the Principal or Deputy Principal at the earliest possible opportunity.

- The School reserves the right to investigate allegations of bullying (and to take disciplinary action where necessary) where bullying is perpetrated by a member of the school community and it impinges on the work or well-being of a student in the school, even where the bullying acts are committed outside of the school.

- The School reserves the right, in accordance with Section 6.3.5 of the DES Procedures to seek the assistance of agencies such as NEPS, the HSE, and the Gardaí, where it deems such assistance is necessary to dealing effectively with bullying behaviour. In any case, where the School deems bullying behaviour to be potentially abusive (see sections 6.8.12, 6.8.13 and 6.8.14 of the DES Procedures) it will consult with the HSE's Children and Family Services to assist it in drawing up an appropriate response or to obtain advice or to make a formal child protection report to the HSE or the Gardaí (as appropriate) in accordance with the DES Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools.

Concerns about or allegations of bullying will be investigated and addressed in accordance with Section 6.8 9 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools. These are summarised 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);

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, 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), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

Investigating and dealing with incidents

- 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.

- Incidents of bullying will be investigated in 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 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(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 will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken. The school will 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;

- It will 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 the Anti-bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, s/he will be advised of his/her right to make an appeal to the Board of Management. Such appeals shall be submitted in writing setting out the grounds for appeal, to the Chairperson of the Board within 15 school days of the Parent/guardian informing the school principal that s/he is of the opinion that the school has not dealt with the case in accordance with the Anti-bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

- Where a parent(s)/guardian(s), having exercised his/her appeal to the Board of Management is still not satisfied, s/he will be advised of his/her 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. All incidents must be reported to 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.

Informal-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.

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows (see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools) :

- Use of Tutor System
- Pastoral Care System
- Individual / Group Work with School Completion Project Worker and/ or Home School Community Liason officer
- SPHE / CSPE Classes

The School has in place a programme of supports for students involved in bullying behaviour. This programme will involve the following elements.

•   Students who have been bullied will be:
- o   offered appropriate counselling;
- o   provided with opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self esteem, to develop their social skills and to build their resilience.

•   Students who have been involved in bullying behaviour will be:
- o   provided with counselling to help them to learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others;
- o   provided with appropriate opportunities to build their self esteem and feelings of self-worth.

•   Students who observe incidents of bullying behaviour will be encouraged to discuss them with their teachers and their parents and to avail of counselling where they feel it may assist them to cope effectively with what they have experienced.

8. Supervision and Monitoring of Anti-bullying in School

•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.

•The implementation and effectiveness of the School's Anti-bullying policy will be an agenda item for staff meetings – so the concerns about the policy and/or the welfare of individual students can be shared and effectively addressed.

•Data gathered through the reporting templates will be collated and analysed annually with a view to monitoring levels of bullying behaviour and identifying issues requiring attention. This analysis will complement the information gathered through student bullying surveys

•At least once in every school term, The Principal will provide a report to the Board of Management setting out the following.

  o the overall number of bullying cases reported since the previous report to the Board.
  o confirmation that all cases referred via the recording template have been or are being, dealt with in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy and the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools. The minutes of Board of Management' meetings will record the Principal's report but in doing so will not include any identifying details of the students involved.

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 Sept29th 2021

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

12. Policy Review

•The Board of Management will undertake an annual review of the school's Anti- bullying policy and its implementation in accordance with the procedures set out in Section 7.2 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools using the checklist included at Appendix 4 of those procedure. (See Appendix 2 of this policy)

•The Board of Management will ensure that an action plan is put in place to address any areas for improvement identified by the annual review.

•Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parent School Association.

•Details of the review will be recorded in the minutes of the Board of Management' meeting that adopted the review and a record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, will be made available to the Patron and the DES. In the case of the DES, it is appreciated that the Inspectorate will place a strong focus on the actions the School/College takes to create a positive school culture and to prevent and tackle bullyin

Appendix 1   Incident Record

1. Name of student being bullied and class group

Name _____ Class _____

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

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| |

3. Source of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es))*

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

Pupil concerned		Playground	
Other Pupil		Classroom	
Parent		Corridor	
Teacher		Toilets	
Other		School Bus	
		Other	

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

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| |

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

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| |

9. Details of actions taken

| |
| |

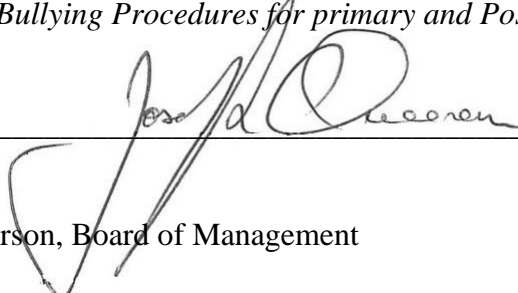Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher)   Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the anti-bullying policy
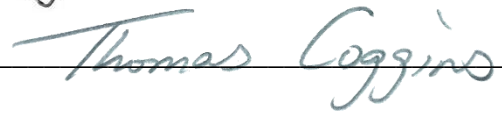
To:_Mayo Sligo Leitrim ETB

The Board of Management of Coláiste Iascaigh wishes to inform you that:

• The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bulling policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting 28th September 2023

• This review was conducted in accordance with the **Appendix 4** of the Department's*Anti-Bullying Procedures for primary and Post-Primary Schools.*

Signed _____ Date 28th September 2023

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _____ Date _____28th September 2023_____

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Appendix 2   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*?	yes
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	yes
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	yes
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?	yes
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	yes
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	yes
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	yes
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	yes
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	yes
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	yes
Has the Board discussed how well the school is handling all reports of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and not therefore included in the Principal's periodic report to the Board?	yes
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	No
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	No
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	No
Has the data available from cases reported to the Principal (by the bullying recording template) been analysed to identify any issues, trends or patterns in bullying behaviour?	No
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	No
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	No

Signed _____ September 28th, 2023
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _____ September 28th, 2023
Principal