



POLICY & PROCEDURE

for

Anti-Bullying and Harassment

(for students)

November 2022

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Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy for Students

1. Policy Statement

1.1 Cavan Institute is committed to providing a learning environment that is free from all types of bullying and harassment. The Institute believes that the college environment should give all students and staff the freedom to study and carry out their duties without having to suffer bullying or harassment from any other person. Bullying and harassment will not be tolerated by the management at the Institute.

1.2 In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB), the Board of Management of Cavan Institute has adopted the following Anti-Bullying Policy within the framework of the Institute's overall Student Code of Conduct. This policy fully complies with the requirements of Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, which were published in September 2013.

1.3 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.

1.3.1 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 college community

1.3.2 Effective leadership

1.3.3 A college-wide approach

1.3.4 A shared understanding of which bullying is and its impact

1.3.5 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

1.3.6 Effective supervision and monitoring of students

1.3.7 Supports for staff

1.3.8 Consistent recording, investigation and follow-up of bullying behaviour (including the use of established intervention strategies)

1.3.9 On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy

2. Scope of Policy

2.1 To whom does the policy apply?

The following policy applies to bullying and/or harassment between students at Cavan Institute. This policy should be read in light of National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children as outlined in *Children First*, national *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* and Cavan Institute's *Policy for Child Protection* as well as its *Student Code of Conduct*.

2.2 When will the policy apply?

This policy applies throughout the academic year during which students are registered for all Institute activities on campus or off-campus (e.g., work experience) and anywhere where students are under supervision of staff (trips, tours, sports outings, etc.). It applies in both the face-to-face context as well as the online context, as a significant element of blended learning now forms part of the delivery mode of all of the Institute's courses.

2.3 Where will the policy apply?

The Institute draws a distinction between incidents which originate from within the Institute environs and those which occur outside Institute grounds or premises. While the same standards apply at all times and in all places, it needs to be recognised that the Institute cannot be held responsible for a student's actions when not on the premises.

However, with a significant volume of blended learning now a part of all courses, the Institute does not distinguish between bullying which takes place on campus or online. The terms of this policy apply fully in both contexts.

In terms of cyber-bullying, the Institute informs students about best practice in the area of internet usage, including protecting their personal data online. Any cyber-bullying incident involving a student at the Institute, either as perpetrator or victim, is of concern, but it is especially so when both perpetrator and victim are students. Equally, online social comment about a member of staff which falls under the categories listed in section 4.5 below will not be tolerated.

3. Aim of Policy

- To create a positive environment which encourages students to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour/harassment.
- To raise awareness of bullying/harassment as a form of unacceptable behaviour with Institute management, teaching staff and students.
- To develop procedures for noting and reporting incidents of bullying/harassment.
- To develop procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying/harassment.
- To develop a programme of support for those affected by bullying/harassment and for those involved in bullying/harassment.
- To review the effectiveness of Institute's policy on anti-bullying and harassment.

4. Definition of Terms

4.1 Bullying

In accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013), 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."

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 and is elaborated in section 4.2 Types of Bullying below

Those who bully others in a non-physical way often do not realise that their actions may have serious legal consequences for them. **The reality, however, is that bullying may constitute a criminal offence.**

4.2 Types of Bullying

A pattern of the following behaviours represents examples of types of bullying but note that this is not an exhaustive list:

4.2.1 Physical Aggression

- Pushing, shoving, kicking, poking, tripping
- Assaults or threats of physical assaults
- Damage to a person's study area or property
- Purposeful invasion of personal space
- Coughing or spitting at another individual

4.2.2 Bullying using Technology

- Cyber bullying, for example, use of text messages, chat rooms or email to humiliate another student (see section 4.2.6 below)
- Abusive phone calls, text messages or inappropriate use of picture images on a mobile phone

4.2.3 Extortion

Extortion is the deliberate extraction of money and other items of property, followed by threats.

4.2.4 Exclusion

Social or physical exclusion by encouraging other students not to be friends with or talk to a victim. Deliberate exclusion includes malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying.

4.2.5 Harassment

Harassment takes place where a person subjects another person ("the victim") to any unwelcome act, request or conduct, including spoken words, gestures or the production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other material, which in respect of the victim is based on any discriminatory ground and which could reasonably be regarded as offensive, humiliating or intimidating to him or her.

Equal Status Act, 2000.

Harassment may be in the form of identity-based bullying on the grounds of gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race or membership of the traveller community.

The following are common but not exclusive examples of harassment:

- Slagging which is persistent and extends to personal remarks
- Personal insults and name calling
- Manipulating an individual's reputation by rumour, gossip, ridicule or innuendo
- Production, display or circulation of offensive material
- Suggestive remarks, jokes, gestures or unwanted physical contact
- Unwelcome comments on appearance
- Unwarranted criticism of performance

4.2.5.1 Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment takes place where a person subjects another person (the victim) to an act of physical intimacy, requests sexual favours from the victim, or subjects the victim to any act or conduct with sexual connotations – including spoken words, gestures or the production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other material.

The act, request or conduct must be unwelcome to the victim and be one that could reasonably be regarded as offensive, humiliating or intimidating to him or her. The victim is treated differently by reason of his or her rejection of or submission to, as the case may be, the act, request or conduct or it could reasonably be anticipated that the victim would be so treated

Equal Status Act, 2000.

The following examples are some of the most common forms of sexual harassment:

- Unwelcome sexual advances
- Sexually suggestive jokes or comments
- Innuendo or lewd comments
- Threats of, or actual, physical assault
- Unnecessary touching
- Displays of sexually suggestive material

4.2.5.2 Racial Harassment

This is identity-based bullying or harassment on the grounds of race/ethnic origin and it is defined as unwanted or unwelcome conduct based on a person's race, which is offensive to the recipient and which might threaten a person's security or create a stressful, hostile or intimidating study environment.

Harassment on the grounds of race may include:

- comments or conduct which ridicules a person's race, ethnic origin, place of origin or religion

- insulting gestures or jokes which relate to race, ethnic origin, citizenship, colour or religion
- mimicking a person's accent, speech, or mannerisms (not aware of cultural differences)
- the display or distribution of derogatory materials which relate to race, ethnic origin, ancestry, place of origin, citizenship, colour, or religion

4.2.6 Cyber-bullying

Cyber-bullying is defined as:

Using Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), including social network sites, internet, email, etc. to demean, humiliate, exclude, or otherwise undervalue or upset another person through direct or indirect methods. It can be an extension of face-to-face bullying, with technology providing the bully with another route to harass their target. In many ways features of cyber-bullying 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.

Examples of cyber-bullying include:

- threats and intimidation
- harassments or 'cyber-stalking' (e.g., repeatedly sending unwanted texts or instant messages)
- vilification/defamation ("flaming")
- exclusion or peer rejection
- impersonation ("masquerading")
- unauthorised publication of private information or images ("outing")

Media used in cyber-bullying may include but is not limited to:

- mobile phones
- Instant Messenger and Voice over Internet Protocols (e.g., Skype)
- chat rooms and message boards
- email
- webcam
- social networking sites
- video hosting sites
- virtual learning environments
- gaming sites, consoles and virtual worlds
- blogs and wikis

4.2.6.1 What makes cyber-bullying distinct?

There are a number of important differences between cyber-bullying and other forms of bullying behaviour, for example,

- **Impact:** the scale and scope of cyber-bullying can be greater than other forms of bullying
- **Targets and perpetrators:** the people involved may have a different profile from traditional bullies and their targets.
- **Location:** cyber-bullying may take place anytime and, given the nature of electronic communication, its effects may be felt in any location.
- **Anonymity:** the person being bullied will not always know who is attacking them.
- **Evidence:** unlike some other forms of bullying, the target of the bullying is likely to have evidence of its occurrence.

4.2.6.2 General Advice to Students

Here is some general advice to students on how to engage respectfully with others online, how to protect yourself online and what to do if you feel you are being bullied online.

- 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 cyber-bullying. You could also be breaking the law.
- **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.
- **Protect your password.** It is good practice to change your password on a regular basis and not to disclose it to other people. Choosing hard-to-guess 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.
- **Block the bully.** Most responsible websites and services allow you to block or report someone who is behaving badly.

- **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.
- **Save the evidence.** It is important to keep records of offending messages, pictures or online conversations, by taking a screenshot/screengrab of the activity on your mobile or other device. 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 Gardaí to investigate the cyber-bullying.
- Make sure you **report incidents** of cyber-bullying. You have the right not to be harassed and/or bullied online and you should report incidents of cyber-bullying which take place. The procedure for reporting incidents of cyber-bullying is the same as for other forms of bullying, and it is outlined in the next section.

5. Procedures to Address Bullying or Harassment

The following are suggested procedures that should be followed by a student if he or she feels that s/he is being bullied or harassed.

5.1 Informal Approach

5.1.1 – The complainant should refer to the definitions above to consider if the conduct in question constitutes bullying or harassment.

5.1.2 – The next step in attempting to deal with cases of bullying or harassment is to try and resolve the problem informally as far as is possible and appropriate. Any student who feels that he/she is being bullied or harassed should explain the following clearly to the alleged perpetrator(s):

- Details of the behaviour in question
- The fact that the perceived behaviour is offensive and unacceptable
- The effect the perpetrator(s) actions are having on him/her, e.g., poor concentration, unable to attend the Institute, lowering of self-esteem
- If it continues, that the student will have no alternative but to use the formal approach and make an official complaint against the perpetrator(s)

In an effort to assist the student with this informal approach, he or she should be encouraged to keep a record of incidents. This will enable him or her to be specific about the behaviour or actions which are causing offence, i.e., dates, what happened, places, witnesses, form of bullying or harassment.

5.1.3 - If the student finds this form of informal approach difficult, there are other forms of help available to him/her. He or she may still decide to adopt the informal approach, but they can get the help from their class tutor or subject tutor or get a friend to act as a morale support when they are making their issues known to the perpetrator(s).

The perpetrator(s) should be made aware at the time of a meeting being arranged that the student will be accompanied by such an individual at this meeting. The accompanying person must be made aware that it is not their role to make the complaint on behalf of the student they are supporting. Any such meeting should again be documented by the student.

5.1.4 - If the alleged perpetrator(s) recognises that a form of bullying or harassment has taken place and agrees to a solution, this solution should be documented and agreed by all parties. The agreement should be monitored from time to time in order for them to continue to interact together in an appropriate manner. Should you have exhausted all available options using an informal approach to obtain a solution then the formal approach to the resolution should be sought.

5.1.5 - Other possible sources of help within the Institute:

- Class Tutor
- Head of School
- Subject Tutor
- Student Counsellor
- Career Guidance Tutors
- Student Chaplain

5.2 Making a Formal Complaint

5.2.1 - If the situation is not resolved informally, then the student may lodge a formal complaint in writing (**Anti-Bullying and Harassment Form** in appendix 11.2). The complaint should be addressed to the student's class tutor and handed to him/her personally. All complaints received will be treated seriously, sensitively and confidentially and will be dealt with as soon as is practicable.

5.2.2 – The student support head of school will lead the investigation of the complaint on behalf of the Institute, under the direction of one of the deputy directors. It is his or her role to calmly seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why with due regard for the rights of students, irrespective of whether they are allegedly involved in bullying behaviour or in a position to provide information about the behaviour being investigated.

5.2.3 - The alleged perpetrator(s) will be invited to attend a meeting where the complaint will be communicated verbally. The alleged perpetrator(s) will be afforded the opportunity to respond. They will also have the complaints procedures explained to them.

5.2.4 - Each party will be given an opportunity to present his/her side of the case to an investigation team at the Institute.

5.2.5 – Whilst it is desirable to maintain the utmost confidentiality, once an investigation begins it may be necessary to interview other parties. Should this be the case, the importance of confidentiality will be stressed to them, and all evidence provided will be confidential.

5.2.6 – Where a group is allegedly involved in bullying behaviour, each student will be interviewed individually in the first instance. Thereafter, where appropriate, all involved will be met as a group and, at this meeting, each member will be asked for his/her account to ensure that all are clear about what each individual is saying. Each member of a group will be supported through the possible pressures that s/he may face from the other members of the group after being interviewed. Where deemed appropriate, those being interviewed may be asked to write down their account of what happened.

5.2.7 – The outcome of the investigation will be conveyed to all parties in writing by a deputy director of the Institute.

5.3 Programme of Support for Working with Students Affected by Bullying

The Institute will put in place a programme of supports for students who have been bullied. This programme will involve the following elements.

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

6. Roles and Responsibilities

6.1 Board of Management

- To approve the policy.
- To ensure that the policy is developed and reviewed annually.
- To ensure that an action plan is put in place to address any areas for improvement identified by the annual review
- To consider reports from the director on the implementation of the policy.

6.2 Director and Deputy Directors

- To provide guidance and support where possible to staff involved in developing the policy.
- To establish an appropriate panel to deal with appeals.
- To discipline the alleged perpetrator(s), if necessary.

6.3 Heads of Schools

- To investigate the bullying and/or harassment and report to the director and deputy directors on the findings.
- To act as an independent person in conjunction with the director/deputy directors to investigate an alleged case of bullying or harassment.
- To record the minutes of the investigation meetings with the students and provide these to the deputy director/director

6.4 Course Tutors and Subject Tutors

- To make students aware of the policy and the procedures to follow if they consider that they are being bullied or harassed.
- To act as a confidant if a student feels that he/she is being bullied or harassed.
- To provide feedback to the policy team on the implementation of the policy.
- To act as a liaison person between the student and head of school in communicating information.

6.5 Students

- To abide by Cavan Institute's "Code of Conduct".
- To maintain records of instances of perceived bullying.
- To follow the appropriate reporting procedures.
- To support any subsequent investigation.
- To inform themselves of how to stay safe both online and offline.

7. Criteria for Successful Implementation of Policy and Procedures

- Students are made aware at induction that a policy exists.
- Students are familiar with the policy and steps to take if they are being bullied or harassed.
- All parties have been given the opportunity to make their case in front of the investigation team.
- Adequate support is available to the victim and the perpetrator(s).
- Investigations of complaints have been handled sensitively and produced a resolution to the dispute.

8. Monitoring Procedures

- The director and deputy directors will monitor the implementation of the policy to ensure that the aims of the policy are being achieved.
- The policy development team will also monitor the implementation of the policy.

9. Review Procedures

- The policy will be reviewed periodically, at a date specified on the cover sheet of this policy. The review team may comprise the director, deputy directors, heads of schools, policy development coordinator and others with specific expertise, as required.
- Institute staff and a selection of students will be surveyed in relation to the policy.
- Where appropriate, recommendations received from staff and students will be acted upon.
- The checklist in Appendix 11.3 will be completed upon review. A copy of the checklist held on file and another copy will be returned to the HR department of CMETB

10. Adoption and Review

The Board of Management of Cavan Institute adopts the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools issued by the Department of Education and Skills (September 2013) as the basis for the way in which the Institute community addresses the issue of bullying.

- 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 procedures and in Appendix 11.3 of this document.
- 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.
- 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 (Cavan and Monaghan ETB) and the DES. In the case of the DES, it is appreciated that the Inspectorate will place a strong focus on the actions the Institute takes to create a positive school culture and to prevent and tackle bullying.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _____

Date: _____

(Director)

Date of next review: November 2023

11. Appendices

11.1 List of Useful Websites

11.2 Anti-Bullying and Harassment Form

11.3 Checklist for Annual Review of the Anti-bullying Policy and its Implementation

11.1 List of Useful Websites

www.webwise.ie

www.beatbullying.org

www.watchyourspace.ie

<http://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Education-Reports/Action-Plan-On-Bullying-2013.pdf>

11.2 Anti-Bullying and Harassment Form

(To be completed by complainant and handed to class tutor)



Student Name: _____

Class: _____

Class Tutor: _____

Type(s) of Alleged Bullying Behaviour: (tick all that apply)

Physical Aggression	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cyber-bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>
Damage to Property	<input type="checkbox"/>	Intimidation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Isolation/Exclusion	<input type="checkbox"/>	Malicious Gossip	<input type="checkbox"/>
Name Calling	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (please provide details)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Nature of Bullying and/or Harassment: *(Please include as much detail as possible, including dates of alleged incidents, names of other students involved, places, images, etc.)*

If behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:

Homophobic /Transphobic	Disability /SEN related	Membership of Traveller Community	Other (specify):
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Possible witnesses to incidents:

Name: _____

Class: _____

Name: _____

Class: _____

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Student's Name

11.3 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.

Review Carried Out 21 November 2022	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 (website) N/A (parents' assoc)
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 students?	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?	No
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 (no cases reported)
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 _____

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _____

Director