



**CBS Thurles**  
**Anti-Bullying Policy**

## **Rationale**

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by Túsla (formerly the NEWB), the Board of Management of CBS Thurles 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 (Dept of Education and Skills, 2013).

This policy must be read in conjunction with the CBS Thurles Code of Behaviour, Child Protection Policy, Internet Acceptable Usage Policy, Health and Safety Statement, Dignity in the Workplace Policy, General Data Protection Regulation Policy (GDPR), Wellbeing School Improvement Plan and other relevant policies.

This policy has been reviewed in accordance with CBS Thurles Child Safeguarding Statement and in line with the Children First Act (2015) and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools (2017).

While renewing this policy, due consideration has been given to all aspects of the wellbeing of students at CBS Thurles and particularly to the Wellbeing School Improvement Plan (May 2018).

General Data Protection Regulations came into force in May 2018, and this policy has been reviewed in accordance with best practice as detailed in this legislation.

**2. The Board of Management (BOM) recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives and wellbeing of students and 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 to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment.
  - supports the wellbeing of all members of the school community.
  - 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.

### **3. In accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools bullying is defined as follows:**

(Dept of Education and Skills, 2013)

Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted, by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying.
- cyber-bullying.
- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the traveller community and bullying of those with 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 CBS Thurles 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 CBS Thurles 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.

#### **3.1 Cyber Bullying**

Social media technologies are defined as information and communication technologies (ICT) such as the internet, digital media, mobile phone and any other online technologies etc.

Cyber bullying means any use of social media technologies (e.g. text messages, group messaging services, instant messaging, personal websites, online personal polling websites, social media networks etc.) that seeks to undermine or humiliate a member/members of the CBS Thurles school community. This includes circulating or publishing through ICT, material recorded without consent for the purpose of undermining/damaging the professional/personal reputation of another person.

This policy also applies when a student engages in inappropriate use of social media, when not under the direct supervision of the school, where there is a clear connection to CBS Thurles and/or a demonstrable impact on its aims, work, reputation and/or personnel.

#### **Responsibilities of Users of IT Devices (Phones, Computers, Laptops, Cameras, etc.)**

1. Keep password secret and protect account access.
2. Do not post sensitive information publicly.

3. Do not retaliate to any incident. Seek support and advice rather than engaging with the perpetrator.
4. Report any incident to the CBS Thurles authorities in a timely manner.
5. Retain any evidence of an incident – including text, communication via educational platform e.g. Google Classroom, emails, voice mail, website or instant message. Do not delete texts or emails. Screenshots should be taken of messages or webpages and care should be taken to record the time, date and address of the site.
6. The Teaching Council's Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers (2nd Edition 2016) states that "Staff should ensure that any communication with students, colleagues, parents, school and is appropriate, including communication via electronic media, such as e-mail, texting and social networking sites."

**4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows: (see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):**

- a. Principal
- b. Deputy Principal(s)
- c. Year Heads
- d. Another teacher should the situation warrant it – e.g. on school trips.

**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 CBS Thurles are as follows: (Dept of Education and Skills, 2013)**

- A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the CBS Thurles community.
- The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping and highlighting the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all of our students through both curricular and extra-curricular activities. Students 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 develop an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on students' lives and the need to respond to it – prevention and intervention.
- Professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teachers and Year Heads.
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include students, parents/guardians and the wider school community.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extracurricular 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 CBS Thurles.
- Involvement of the student council in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Cairdeas system, mentoring and other student support activities that can help to support students and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- The Anti-Bullying Policy for CBS Thurles is included in student journals and displayed publicly on the Student Council noticeboard. It will include the names of the relevant teachers responsible for investigating allegations of bullying.
- The CBS Thurles Anti-Bullying Policy is discussed with students and all students and

parents/guardians can access a copy through [cbsthurles.ie](http://cbsthurles.ie).

- The implementation of regular whole school awareness measures e.g. a dedicated period once per term with a focus on bullying prevention strategies.
- Encouragement of a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way students will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is
- of vital importance. It should be made clear to all students that when they report incidents
- of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
- Ensuring that students 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.
  - Make a phone call to the school or to a trusted teacher in the school.
  - Get a parent/guardian or friend to tell on your behalf.
  - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Ensuring the full implementation of the SPHE, CSPE curricula and the RSE programme.

**6. The CBS Thurles 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:**

(Dept of Education and Skills, 2013, p. 28)

**Reporting Bullying behaviour**

- Any student or parent/guardian may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in CBS Thurles.
- 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 judgment in accordance with the Department of Education and Skill's definition of bullying to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
- Parents/guardians and students are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist CBS Thurles 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 students concerned. Students 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? This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
- 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 parents/guardians 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 CBS Thurles Anti-Bullying Policy).
  - Where the relevant teacher has determined that a student has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him how he is in breach of the CBS Thurles Anti-Bullying Policy. The student will be instructed to immediately stop the bullying behaviour and efforts should be made to try to get him to see the situation from the perspective of the student being bullied.
  - It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of students and parents/guardians) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the student being disciplined, his parents/guardians and CBS Thurles.
- 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 judgment, 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 relations between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable.
    - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents/guardians or CBS Thurles Principal or Deputy Principal.

Where appropriate, a Restorative Practice approach will be adopted ensuring 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 student who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.

- Where a parent/guardian is not satisfied that CBS Thurles has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent/guardian must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
- In the event that a parent/guardian has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, CBS Thurles must advise the parents/guardians of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.
- It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner.

## **7. CBS Thurles 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.

## Appendix 3 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	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Pupil	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

Playground	<input type="checkbox"/>
Classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corridor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Toilets	<input type="checkbox"/>
School Bus	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

### 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	<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 (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

### 7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

### 8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

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### 9. Details of actions taken

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Signed \_\_\_\_\_ (Relevant Teacher) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal \_\_\_\_\_

\* **Note:** The categories listed in the tables 3, 4 & 6 are suggested and schools may add to or amend these to suit their own circumstances.





- 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.
- These records will be stored in a secure place in accordance with GDPR guidelines.

### **Formal**

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

- in cases where he/she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within twenty school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred.
- where CBS Thurles has decided as part of its Anti-Bullying Policy that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal(s). These should be in line with the CBS Thurles Code of Behaviour.

When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the Principal. These records are to be stored in a secure place.

### **Established intervention strategies**

Teacher interviews all students, negotiating agreements between students and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process.

1. Working with parents/guardians to support school interventions.
2. A no blame approach.
3. Circle Time.
4. Restorative Practice.
5. Implementing sociogram questionnaires.
6. Peer mediation where suitable training has been given.
7. Working with guidance counsellor.
8. Use Department of Education and Skills website 'tacklebullying.ie'.
9. Ken Rigby also recommends further intervention strategies (Bullying Awareness Week, 2003)
10. The traditional disciplinary approach.
11. Strengthening the victim.
12. Mediation.
13. Restorative Practice.
14. The Support Group Method.
15. The Method of Shared Concern.

### **8. The school's programme of support for working with students affected by bullying is as follows:**

(Dept of Education and Skills, 2013, p. 28)

All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the students affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience e.g.:

- Pastoral care system
- Cairdeas mentoring system

- Tutor/Year Head system
  - Care team/Student Support Team
  - Group work such as circle time
  - Friends for Life
- If students require counselling or further supports CBS Thurles will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be for the student affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.
  - Students should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

### **9. Supervision and Monitoring of Students**

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.

### **10. Prevention of Harassment**

The Board of Management confirms that CBS Thurles will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of students or staff or the harassment of students or staff on any of the nine grounds specified: gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the traveller community.

### **11. Access and Publication**

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

### **12. Review**

This policy and its implementation are reviewed by the Board of Management regularly. Notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the CBS Thurles website and provided to the Parents Council. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

### **13. Approval**

This policy has been approved by the CBS Thurles Board of Management.

Signed: Mary S. Dwyer Date: 22/06/23  
 Chairperson, Board of Management