

Anti-Bullying Policy



St. Conaire's National School Bunscoil Chonaire Naofa

Rationale

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 St. Conaire's National School 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 and incorporates measures of best practice included in the DES Report on Implementation of Anti Bullying Measures in Schools.

Our school policy on bullying has been reviewed in 2023 through the lens of the Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying (Ireland's Whole Education Approach to preventing and addressing bullying in schools December 2022).

Relationship to School Ethos

Our Mission Statement states that *St. Conaire's N.S. aims to create a happy, secure, and stimulating learning environment in which all children are treated as unique individuals and are given the opportunity to work hard, care for each other, grow in self-esteem and develop as fully as possible their potential as human beings.*

In line with our Mission Statement, the school community strongly believes that respect for all must be promoted.

Principles of Best Practice

The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact 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. As St. Conaire's anti-bullying policy has been reviewed through the lens of the Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying, the four key principles of prevention, support, oversight and community are reflected in our practices.

Prevention: We work together with all stakeholders to create a school culture that is welcoming and inclusive. We model and demonstrate equality and respect in our interactions with each other. We recognise and support diversity and strive to implement a 'zero tolerance' practice in relation to bullying.

Support: We strive to adopt a proactive approach to bullying by building positive relationships, offering preventative programmes, early intervention strategies and supportive structures for our school community. We are committed to a school wide wellbeing programme, recognise the importance of trusted adults, model positive behaviour, offer peer support programmes, safe spaces within the school and curricular support programmes to pupils.

Oversight: Our school policy and planning reflect our commitment to alleviate bullying. We are committed to developing teacher skills, resourcing professional development and programmes, encouraging communication, advocating a consistent school wide approach, managing and monitoring data in relation to incidents of bullying.

Community: We work in partnership with management, personnel, pupils and parents in relation to bullying. Our responsibilities are defined, communicated and reviewed. There is meaningful engagement with students in relation to ‘Our Pupil Charter’. We engage with community supports as part our approach. (Internet safety, libraries, gardaí, translators etc)

Bullying

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

“Unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted, by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time. Bullying is not an isolated incident between children.”

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

1. Deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip, and other forms of relational bullying
 2. Cyber-bullying
 3. 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 and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school’s Code of Behaviour.
 - 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.

Bullying Behaviours

General Behaviours which apply to all types of bullying:

Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. gender, including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the traveller community.

- Physical Aggression
- Damage to property
- Name Calling
- Slagging
- Insulting or offensive gestures
- Invasion of personal space
- Production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person.
- Offensive graffiti
- Extortion
- Intimidation

Cyber:

- Denigration: Spreading rumours, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation
- Harassment: Continually sending vicious or disturbing messages to an individual
- Impersonation: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another'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
- Abusive communication on social networks
e.g. Facebook / Ask. f.m. / Twitter / You Tube or through games consoles
- 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 e-mail
- Abusive website comments / Blogs / Pictures
- Abusive posts on any form of communication technology

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 attack
- Threats

Race, Nationality and Ethnic Background:

- Discrimination, prejudice, comments, or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background
- Exclusion based on any of the above

Relational

- Malicious gossip
- Isolation and 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

Sexual:

- Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching
- Harassment

Special Educational Needs / Disability:

- Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs
- Mimicking a person's disability
- Setting others up for ridicule
- Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues.
- Name calling

Signs and Symptoms of Bullying

Physical Indicators:

- Unexplained bruising or cuts etc.
- Loss of / damage to personal property
- Stammering
- Frequent minor illnesses, headaches, tummyaches
- Obsessive behaviour, physical appearance, weight.
- Hunger / Thirst / Loss of appetite
- Bedwetting
- Requests for extra money

Emotional / Psychological Indicators:

- Outbursts of anger, temper, irritability at home
- Bullying siblings, parents
- Change in a normally well behaved child
- Changes in mood, appetite, sleep pattern
- Tiredness, neglect of appearance
- Expressions of sadness, worthlessness
- Nightmares, crying at night
- Restless, dangerous, wild, disruptive behaviour.
- Cynicism, black moods
- Implied or threats of suicide

School Related Indicators:

- Reluctance to go, wanting to be accompanied.
- Returning in bad form
- Changing route
- Avoiding certain days
- Nervousness in class
- Punctuality problems
- poor concentration
- deterioration of school work
- expressions of hopelessness
- reluctance to take part in activities
- abusive phone calls, texts, emails

Teachers responsible for Dealing with Bullying

- The relevant teacher for investigating and dealing with bullying will normally be the class teacher.
- The teacher on duty at break time may be the relevant teacher. However, all incidents of alleged bullying should be referred to the class teacher.
- The relevant teacher may be the Principal and/or Deputy Principal if the incident is reported to them.

Education and Prevention Strategies

Parental Controls

- Keeping up to date with the risks and dangers associated with the use of social media and attending information meetings organised by the school.
- Parental commitment to adhere to Anti-Bullying Policy for new entrants
- Monitoring use of the internet by their children outside of school time
- Ensuring that restrictions set by social network sites are adhered to e.g. Facebook should only be used by children **over thirteen years** of age
- Consolidating the work being completed in school to ensure the pupils become responsible digital citizens.

School Wide Approach

- Fostering an atmosphere of respect for all members of the school community
- Promoting the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping and so highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour
- Addressing the issue of sexual orientation where it arises in Classes Third to Sixth and so avoid homophobic name calling: *A factual approach is adopted if the word 'gay' comes up. The following agreed explanation is to be given: The majority of people are attracted to people of the opposite sex. This is called being heterosexual. Some people are attracted to people of the same sex. This is called being 'homosexual' or 'gay'.*
- Fostering and enhancing the self-esteem of pupils through curricular and extracurricular activities.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours along with supervision of communication within the school.
- Involvement of Student Council in contributing to a safe school environment
- School rules in place and regularly discussed with children
- Anti-Bullying Charter set up & Anti Bullying Agreement in each classroom
- Positive verbal affirmation of good behaviour. Our Golden Expectations reward system utilised.
- Affirmation of good behaviour through the school's Golden Ticket reward system.

Implementation of Curricula and Initiatives

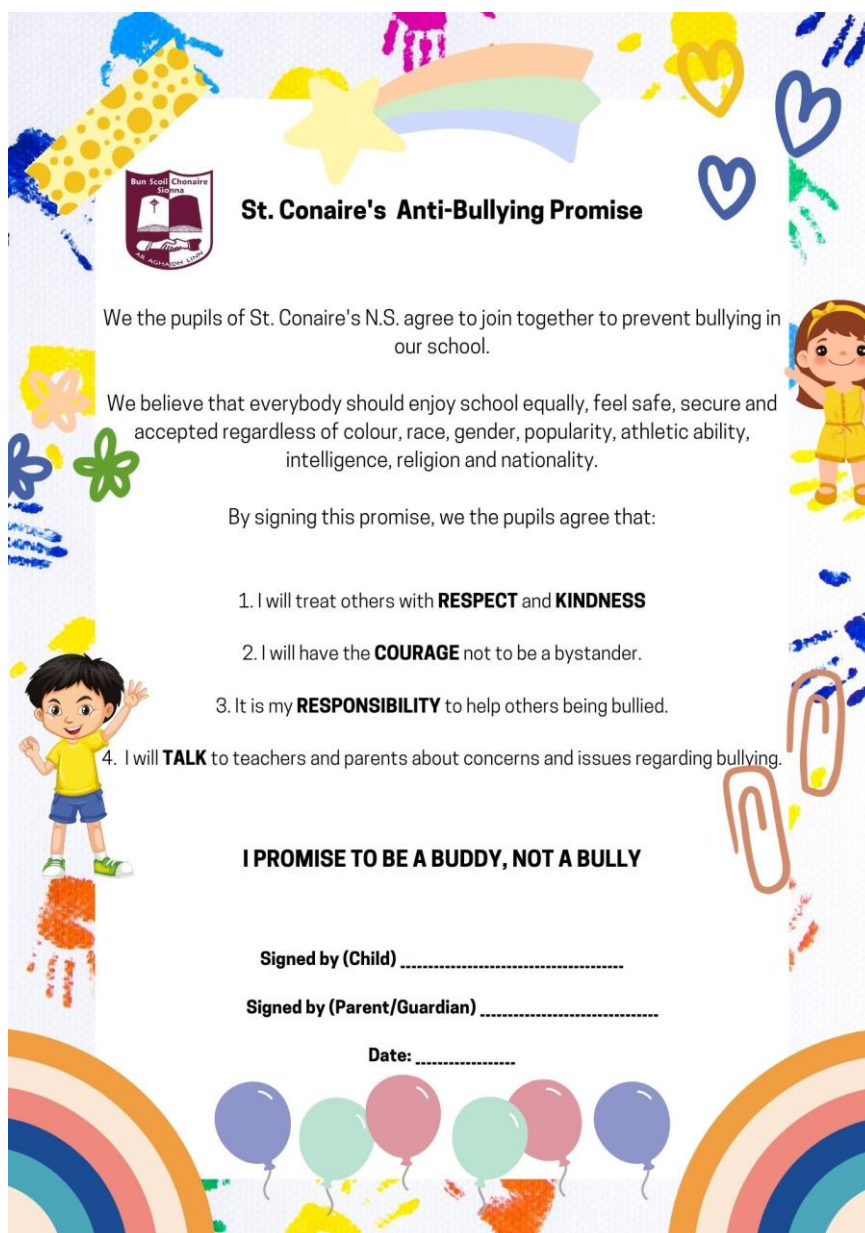
- S.P.H.E. & RSE Programme
- Stay Safe Programme
- Walk Tall Programme
- World Internet Safety Day
- Weaving Wellbeing
- Promoting good behaviour (Golden Expectations)
- Wellbeing Wednesday
- Individualised Behavioural Plans
- Biennial seminars on Cyberbullying for pupils, parents and staff (Lurtel)
- Annual Webwise/ My Selfie/HTML Programmes (All Classes in January)
- Support from counsellor
- Circle Time
- Anti-Bullying Campaign incorporating use of class surveys
- Amber Flag initiative
- Friends for Life (targeted intervention)
- Student Council & Student Voice
- Buddy Programme
- Zones of regulation
- Social Stories
- Muinín after-school programme
- Social groups
- Buddy system
- Safe Space

Relevant Links to other Policies

- Code of Behaviour
- Child Protection Policy
- Acceptable Usage / Internet Safety Policy
- Well-Being Policy (Pending)

Anti-Bullying Charter

The following charter is a result of consultation with St. Conaire's Student Council.



Procedures for Dealing with Bullying

The school raises awareness and understanding about the nature and unacceptability of bullying, enabling children to recognise, reject and report bullying when they see it. This is done through a variety of lessons, surveys, and video clips on the Anti-Bullying Campaign Programme.

The primary aim for the relevant teacher in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved, rather than to apportion blame.

Reporting Bullying Behaviour

- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. In that way, pupils will gain confidence in ‘telling’. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It is made clear to pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly. Our aim is to develop a culture of a Telling School.
- Parents are invited to discuss their concerns with the relevant teacher if they feel their child is being bullied. If a parent reports an incident of alleged bullying to the school, which was reported to them by their child, in investigating this bullying, the school will first begin by speaking to the child who reported it to their parent. This conversation will be conducted sensitively, outside of the classroom, to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- If an incident of alleged bullying has been reported directly to the principal, by a parent or pupil, the principal will bring this report to the relevant class teacher to investigate further. The principal may become involved again in the investigation, if necessary (See below for procedure).
- Non-teaching staff such as the secretary, SNA’s, caretaker and cleaner are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

Investigating Bullying Behaviour

- 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 may be resolved. A record is kept of all incidents investigated and the Principal must be informed.
- Parents and children 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 are encouraged to take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.

The following procedure will be followed:

1. If a group is involved, each member will be spoken to individually at first by the relevant teacher and another teacher, either the Principal or Deputy Principal.
2. It may in certain circumstances be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident.
3. When determining whether bullying has occurred the relevant teacher will refer to the definition of bullying as outlined in this policy.
4. **Unprovoked incidents of name calling** will require the relevant teacher completing the template for the recording of bullying behaviour ([Appendix 1](#)). If these incidents occur on yard the relevant teacher will consult with the class teacher of the children involved. These records will be kept in the teachers Continuum of Support folder.
5.
 - a. In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken. As per the school Code of Behaviour, a sanction may include a reflection sheet being given to the child. This will be completed with a parent/guardian, signed by a parent/guardian and, if appropriate, a letter of apology attached. This will be kept in the relevant teacher's Continuum of Support folder.

The relevant teacher will also complete a template for the recording of bullying behaviour ([Appendix 1](#)). These records are to be stored in the teachers Continuum of Support folder. Bullying behaviour that warrants a reflection sheet must also be recorded in the Behaviour Tracker on Microsoft Teams.

When a template for the recording of bullying behaviour is completed, a copy will also be given to the principal.

- b. In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has not occurred (e.g. an isolated incident, a misunderstanding, an accident), but where the allegation was of a serious nature or where a pupil is particularly distressed, the parents of the parties involved may be contacted so the incident and how it was addressed can be explained to parents, so they may speak about it with their child, if they wish. Any other information should also be recorded e.g. a record of the discussions that took place and the actions taken. A template for the recording of bullying behaviour will be completed by the relevant teacher and stored in their Continuum of Support folder.

Reporting of Incidents of Bullying Flowchart



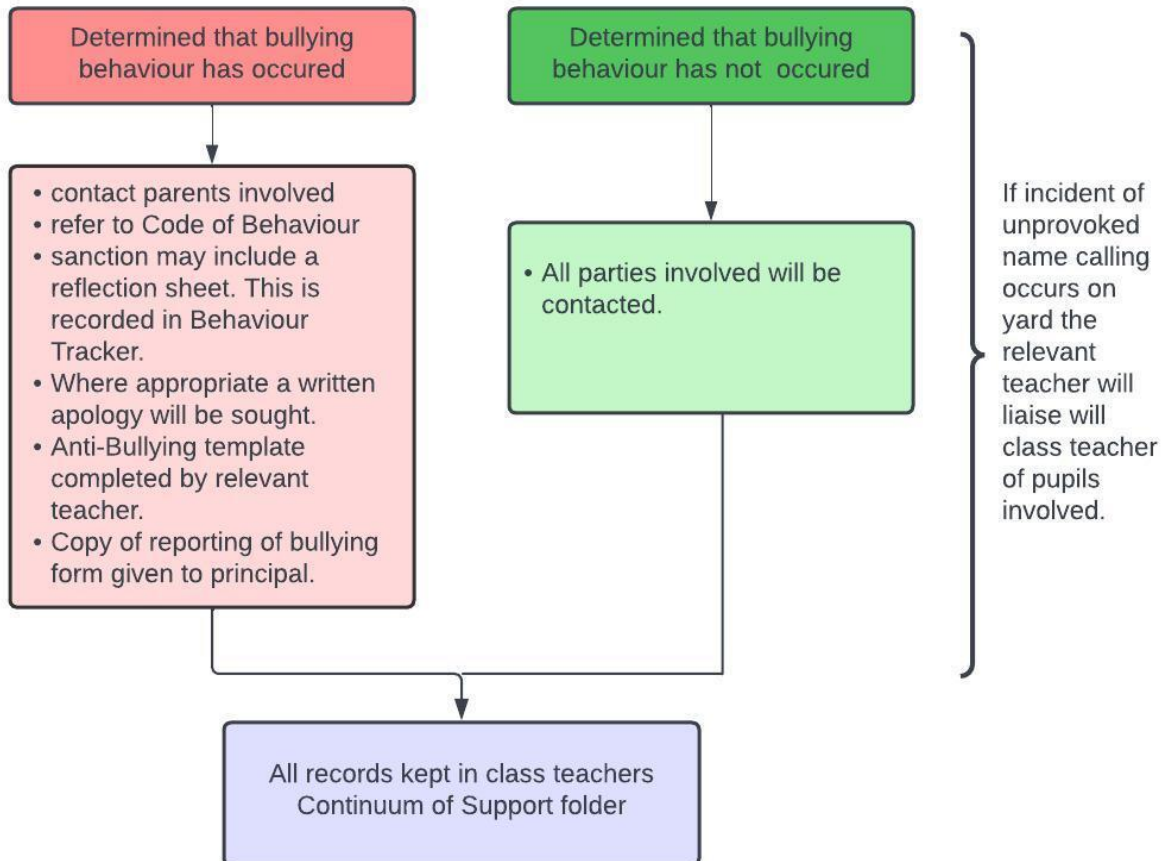
Anti-bullying Policy

- Procedures for addressing claims of bullying -

Always refer to definition outlined in anti-bullying policy when investigating claims of bullying

"Unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted, by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time. Bullying is not an isolated incident between children."

Each individual involved is spoken to and written accounts may be taken.



Follow Up & 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 parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal

- If the bullying behaviour continues, then further sanctions from the school's Code of Behaviour will be enforced.

- Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents will be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.

- In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school will advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

- The School Discipline Committee will provide oversight and monitor the effectiveness of the anti-bullying procedures.

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.

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.

Implementation, Review & Communication

This policy was reviewed and adopted by the Board of Management on _____ and has been made available to school personnel, the Parents Association and has been published on the school website. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

At least once in every school term, the Principal must provide a report to the Board of Management setting out:

1. The overall number of bullying cases reported (by means of the bullying recording template [Appendix 1](#)) since the previous report to the Board of Management.
2. Confirmation that all cases referred to above 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*.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year ([Appendix 2](#)). Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school staff (via email & staffroom noticeboard) and to parents through the school newsletter & Parents' Association. ([Appendix 3](#)).

Signed

Chairperson
Board of Management

Principal

Appendix 1: 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	
Bus to events	
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

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Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date _____

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 <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools</i> ?	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?	Yes
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 David Hogan Chairperson, Board of Management

Date October 14 2024

Signed Peter Walsh _____
Principal

Date October 14 2024

Appendix 3: Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the anti-bullying policy policy

To: Parents and Staff of St. Conaire's NS

The Board of Management of St. Conaire's NS wishes to inform you that:

- The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of Monday, October 14 2024
- This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in Appendix 4 of the Department's *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Signed : David Hogan (Chairperson of the Board of Management)
 Peter Walsh (Principal)

Review and Ratified at the Board of Management held on October 14th, 2024.

