



Coláiste Pobail Ail Finn
Ail Finn, Co. Ros Comáin

Elphin Community College
Elphin, Co. Roscommon



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Bord Oideachais agus Oiliúna
na Gaillimhe agus Ros Comáin
Galway and Roscommon
Education and Training Board

ELPHIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Anti – Bullying Policy

September 2021

Mission Statement:

In Elphin Community College our Mission is to provide an educational environment that will enable each pupil to develop his/her potential academically, physically, socially and spiritually. We strive to develop and maintain a safe, supportive and caring school which seeks to provide the best opportunities for everyone to develop his or her potential to the full. Everyone in Elphin Community College is a valued member of the school community and diversity is a valued part of the school culture.

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 Elphin Community College 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 2013.

This policy comprehends bullying that is either perpetrated by students or experienced by students in the College. The matter of intra-staff bullying is addressed in the following ETB policies:

- Bullying Prevention Policy – Compliant Procedure for ETB Staff.
- Harassment/Sexual Harassment prevention policy – complaint procedure for ETB staff.

The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

- A positive school culture and climate which:
 - is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity
 - encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
 - promotes respectful relationships across the school community
- 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 pupils; and
 - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including, homophobic and transphobic bullying
 - effective supervision and monitoring of pupils
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies) and
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

Definition of Bullying:

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”.

While most bullying is typically repeated a once off incident may be regarded as bullying if it has a serious effect on the victim.

Types of Bullying

<p>General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc. • Physical aggression • Damage to property • Name calling • Slagging • The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person • Offensive graffiti • Extortion • Intimidation • Insulting or offensive gestures • The “look” or ‘filthies’, e.g., a facial expression which conveys aggression and/or dislike • Invasion of personal space • Any behaviour which causes a student to feel uncomfortable • A combination of any of the types listed.
<p>Cyber</p>	<p>The ETBI Cyberbullying in Schools defines cyberbullying as follows: “Cyberbullying refers to a situation where anyone is repeatedly tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed or otherwise targeted by another person using text messaging, email, instant messaging or any other type of digital technology”.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harassment: the sending of vicious, mean or disturbing message(s) to an individual. • Denigration: Spreading rumours, lies or gossip to hurt a person’s reputation • Impersonation: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person’s name • Flaming: Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight • Trickery: Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online • Outing: Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images • Exclusion: Purposefully excluding someone from an online group • Cyber stalking: Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety • Silent telephone/mobile phone call • Abusive / offensive telephone/mobile phone calls • Abusive / offensive text messages • Abusive / offensive email • Abusive / offensive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Messenger /Ask.fm/ Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles /WhatsApp /Snapchat / Instagram etc. • Abusive / offensive website comments/Blogs/Pictures

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Abusive / offensive posts on any form of communication technology
<p>Identity based behaviours: Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).</p>	
Relational	<p>This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Malicious gossip Isolation & exclusion Ignoring Excluding from the group Taking someone's friends away "Bitching" Spreading rumours Breaking confidence Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear The "look" or 'filthies' Encouraging others to ignore / target an individual or group Use of terminology such as 'nerd' in a derogatory way
Race, nationality, ethnic background, family status and membership of the Traveller community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background Exclusion on the basis of any of the above Stereotyping Mimicking accents Any name calling or labelling in a derogatory manner
Homophobic and transgender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation or gender identity Taunting a person because of sexual orientation or gender identity Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian, tranny...used in a derogatory manner Physical intimidation or attacks Threats Any name calling or labelling in a derogatory manner
Sexual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching Harassment Unwelcome sexual texts or emails
Special Educational Needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name calling Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs. Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues. Mimicking a person's disability Setting others up for ridicule Targeting exceptionally able students in a negative manner

The above list is not exhaustive

A false accusation of bullying is regarded as a serious misbehaviour.

Statement on Bullying:

As per the Code of Positive Behaviour of Elphin Community College (Appendix 2); Bullying is deemed to High Level Behaviour which can warrant expulsion.

- Every student in the school is entitled to respect and to be free of any type of bullying.
- All students are entitled to an education free from fear and intimidation.
- All students are entitled to good teaching and learning conditions free from harassment or abuse.
- The school will work proactively as far as it can to ensure that bullying does not take place.
- Reporting incidents of bullying is responsible behaviour.
- A record will be kept of all reported incidents of bullying.
- The matter will be dealt with seriously and by the appropriate authorities where necessary.
- The school has a programme of support for the bullied and the bully.
- Appropriate action will be taken to ensure that it does not continue.

The Relevant Teachers in this school are:

- Principal
- Deputy Principal
- Year Heads
- Subject Teachers
- Care Team Personnel
- Guidance Counsellor

Any teacher or member of staff may act as the “relevant teacher” if circumstances warrant it. The school deems that every staff member (both teaching and non-teaching) has a responsibility to report any unwanted negative behaviour or bullying.

Responsible reporting must be the norm within the school (using the Bullying Incident Report form attached as Appendix 1 or online through VS Ware using the Bullying Behaviour Tab). All reports of bullying no matter how trivial will be noted and investigated by the school.

- Students should discuss any suspected or alleged incident of bullying with a teacher or another trusted adult within the school. This is responsible behaviour rather than “telling tales”.
- All staff members who witness or become aware of suspected incidences of bullying should report in writing to the relevant Year Head (using Appendix 1).
- Parents/Guardians should contact the relevant Year Head regarding any alleged incidents of bullying behaviour which they might suspect or that have come to their attention through their children or other parents.
- Where possible this concern should be expressed in writing.

Education and Prevention Strategies:

- Anti-bullying training with 1st Year students.
- Promotion of anti-bullying through the curriculum and in particular during SPHE and Religious Education.
- Parental involvement through parents' evenings, coffee mornings.
- Prefect system.
- Internet usage policy.
- Supervision of students on school premises.
- Continuing Professional Development.
- SPHE class.
- Restorative Practice.
- "Worry box" for students.
- Teacher / Year Head System.
- Belonging + Transition programme for 1st years.
- Evidence informed programmes, i.e., FRIENDS For Life
- Student Support Team.
- Guidance Counsellor.
- School Counsellor.
- Anti-bullying week.
- Reporting to Designated Liaison Person for Child Protection Guidelines.

Anti-Bullying Week:

This is a cross-curricular, whole school community initiative being proposed within the College that is aimed at reducing the incidence of bullying within the school. Various activities are co-ordinated with the theme of anti-bullying including:

- Anti-Bullying workshops for students
- Design a poster competition (Art)
- Anti-Bullying lessons (SPHE/Pastoral Care)
- Internet Safety and Cyber Bullying (IT)
- Human/Civil Rights lessons (CSPE/History)
- Justice/ Relationships/Morality (Religion)
- Suitable texts/drama/poetry dealing with Bullying
- Debating
- Student Council meetings
- Prefects/mentor system
- Keywords connected with bullying (Cross Curricular)
- Random acts of kindness programme (Whole school)
- "Worry box" for students
- Student survey on bullying
- Annual review of Anti-Bullying policy

Procedures for investigating and dealing with Bullying:

- The person to become aware of the incident must complete a Bullying Incident Report Form (Appendix 1) or completes an online report using VS Ware using the Bullying Behaviour Tab to ensure the matter is brought to the attention of the relevant Year Head.
- The Year Head will deal with the alleged incident using their professional judgement.
- All parties may be interviewed separately by the Year Head.
- If a group is involved, each person may be interviewed separately and asked for their account in writing of the alleged incident.
- If deemed appropriate a Restorative Practice meeting will be suggested.
- The school personnel will keep their written record of the interview. The persons involved will be asked to write down their account of the alleged incident.

- In the professional judgement of the Year Head if the incident is of a serious or repeated nature then it will be forwarded onto the Principal / Deputy Principal with all supporting documents.
- If the behaviour is deemed as a bullying situation, parents/ guardians of the individuals will be informed.
- The Care Team may be consulted for their professional expertise if deemed necessary.

Programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying:

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

If pupils require further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be for the pupils affected by the bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.

Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all alleged incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

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 on any of the nine grounds specified under legislation. The nine grounds are gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion and membership of the Traveller Community

Ratification and Review:

This policy was accepted and ratified by the Board of Management of Elphin Community College on _____.

This policy will be made available to all 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.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Ongoing reviews and evaluation take cognisance of changing information, changing society, legislation, ministerial/government instructions, developments in the school-based programmes and feedback from students, staff, parents/guardians and the Board of Management/ETB

Signed: _____
(Chairperson, Board of Management)

Signed: _____
(Principal)

This policy will be reviewed in May 2023.

Appendix 1 – Bullying Incident Report:

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name _____ Class _____

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

3. Source of bullying concern/report

(Tick relevant box (es))

Pupil concerned	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	

4. Location of incidents

(Tick relevant box(es))

School grounds	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
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	
Damage to property	
Isolation / Exclusion	
Name Calling	

Cyber-bullying	
Intimidation	
Malicious Gossip	
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: _____

Date submitted to Year Head: _____

Appendix 2: Disciplinary Procedures:

The purpose of using appropriate sanctions is to provide space to initially promote students to reflect on, take responsibility for and encouragement to change their behaviour. In accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour, sanctions and disciplinary procedures imposed in instances of bullying behaviour will have as their priority:

- The health and safety and welfare of the student who has been bullied
- The interests of the general student body
- Reconciliation between the parties to the bullying incident
- The effect on the student who engaged in bullying behaviour
- Prevention of further occurrences
- Preservation of the Anti-Bullying ethos of the school

Disciplinary Measures to be taken:

1. Advice from the teacher
2. Warning from the teacher
3. Classroom management of issue by teacher.
4. After three such incidences of misbehaviour, the behaviour is recorded on VS Ware.
5. At any stage the Parental Advisory Letter may be sent to indicate teacher concern.
6. Withdrawal of privileges (to include Student Report Card/ withdrawal from extracurricular activities/downtown privileges, if applicable/ community service in the school/extra written work at lunch) may be sanctioned at any stage after Step 4.
7. On report, with Support Card and the comments communicated to parents and signed daily.
8. Detention at lunch time. N.B. Lunchtime detention is for the duration of the break and will necessitate the bringing of a packed lunch.
9. Referral to Year Head and Guidance Counsellor/other intervention where appropriate.
10. Referral to the Discipline Committee (at the discretion of School Authorities can happen at any time, depending on the seriousness of the incident).
11. Referral to the Deputy Principal, Principal and Guidance Counsellor.
12. Parents informed by telephone or letter.
13. Parents/Guardians are asked to come to the school to discuss those issues concerning their child. At the discretion of the School Authorities this can happen at any time, depending on the seriousness of the incident.
14. A Behaviour Contract may be drawn up at any time, at the discretion of the school authorities.
15. Suspension for a given number of days
16. Expulsion. It is the policy of this school that students will be asked to provide a written account of either their own or somebody else's actions.

Summary of Disciplinary Procedures

Elphin Community College will endeavour to ensure that, in applying any sanction, the duty of care to the student is maintained. Sanctions and rewards are necessary to ensure that the school rules are adhered to, thereby creating a safe, positive environment for both teaching and learning. Positive behaviour is actively encouraged, and sanctions and rewards will be used to support this learning process. Sanctions will be appropriate to the age, developmental stage and with regard to the cultural background of the student. The significance of communication is recognised as is the importance of parental support for maintaining positive student behaviour.

Serious breaches of discipline may bypass some or all of these steps.

- **Step 1** Behaviour is recorded by class teachers for breach of school rules and students may receive a teacher-imposed sanction, e.g. extra work, cleaning duty, litter duty. After the third occasion of minor behavioural disturbance the student's behaviour will be recorded on VS

Ware. Parental access is granted on our VS Ware system. A Parental Advisory Letter may be issued by the teacher at this stage or indeed at any stage leading up to this.

- **Step 2** After a third negative comment is recorded on VS Ware, the Year Head will speak with the student. Parents/guardians may also be informed.
- **Step 3** If the issue persists, the Year Head contacts parents/guardians informing them of the situation. Student meets with further intervention if necessary, to include referral to Guidance Counsellor and/or other agency. If student continues to receive records of behavioural issues, he/she is put on Report.
- The report card must be presented to the teacher at the beginning of the lesson and collected and signed by the teacher at the end of the lesson.
- The student will return the completed report card on a daily basis to either the Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal at the end of each school day to be reviewed and signed. This report card will then be signed by the parent/guardian on completion.
- This support step is for a minimum of two weeks.
- **Step 4** If a student has attained 20 discipline points, student sits a detention. This will take place on a Thursday at lunchtime from 1:20pm -1:45pm. The student will be issued with extra work. They will not be allowed complete homework or study during the period of this detention. **Failure to attend detention will result in an automatic one-day suspension.**
- **Step 5** It is the policy of this school to have a Discipline Committee to help implement the code of discipline procedure. This is done through cooperation with ancillary staff, teachers, principal and Board of Management, under the guidelines laid down in the Code of Positive Behaviour. When it is deemed necessary by the Principal, a student will be brought before the Discipline Committee who will, as a body, impress upon the student, how unacceptable his/her misbehaviour is becoming and will encourage him/her to change his/her ways. Before a second report/detention is issued the student will meet with members of the Discipline Committee. The Discipline Committee will outline what sanctions and/or punishments are deemed necessary, it will examine how effective they are, and it will have the power to amend various sanctions and/or punishments to improve the overall value of the Code of Positive Behaviour. It will do this in consultation with the Principal, staff and Board of Management. At all times there will be five members on the Discipline Committee, the Principal, the Deputy Principal, an Assistant Principal I, an Assistant Principal II and another teacher. The parents/guardians may also be invited in for a meeting with this committee and/or the Year Head.
- It will remain at the discretion of the Discipline Committee/ Year Heads and Senior Management as to the appropriate consequence for a student's misbehaviour.
- If deemed serious enough, a student may be automatically placed on detention or report or to appear before the Discipline Committee. This shall remain at the discretion of the Year Heads and Senior Management.
- **Step 6** If the student has to be put back on report or continues to collect records of behavioural issues there will be a meeting arranged with some or all of the following: Principal, Deputy Principal, Year Head and a Parent/Guardian. The school may request the attendance of both parents/guardians. A student Behaviour Support plan will be mutually agreed by all parties. Each subject teacher will complete a full report on the student which will be discussed at the meeting. A possible outcome of this meeting may be the suspension of the student.
- **Step 7 Incidents of serious misconduct or misbehaviour may lead to suspension and/or exclusion. Please refer to the school's suspension and exclusion policy.**

Ladder of Referral

1. **Stage 1: Ladder of Intervention: Teachers** All Teachers are responsible for the maintenance of discipline within his/her class and share, with other teachers a common responsibility for good order within the school and school grounds and on school outings. Teachers are encouraged to impose class sanctions before the recording of incidents on VS Ware. The Parental Advisory Letter may be used at any time before the third instance on VS Ware.

2. **Stage 2: Ladder of Intervention: Three instances of Misbehaviour recorded on VS Ware referred to the Year Head** means that the matter is being brought to the attention of the Year Head. The Year Head meets with the student and/or parents/guardians where necessary and imposes an appropriate intervention/sanction. If a student is placed on detention and does not present for detention yet is present at school, then the Year Head refers the issue to the Deputy Principal/Principal who will sanction a suspension.

3. **Stage 3: Ladder of Intervention: Deputy Principal** The Deputy Principal as the primary overseer of discipline in the school, may at any time impose any of the sanctions mentioned in the above Stages and may advise the Year Head to impose certain sanctions and if consulted give direction in relation to procedures. One additional sanction the Deputy Principal may impose is the withdrawal from class for introspection and reflection for a brief period of time and the Deputy Principal may instruct or consult with the Year Head on its implementation. **NOTE: Teachers may never exclude a student from their classes and/or leave the student unsupervised as this is a breach of Health and Safety.**

4. **Stage 4: Ladder of Intervention: Principal** The Principal has final responsibility for the day-to-day running of the school. He or she ensures that the implementation of sanctions is fair, equitable and appropriate. The Principal is the last voice of reason regarding a fair process that begins in the classroom. All measures must be exhausted and deemed to be so by the Deputy Principal before a referral is brought to the Principal or if a single incident is considered by the Deputy Principal after being consulted by the Year Head to be so serious that the Principal's attention is sought straight away. The Deputy Principal only will determine if this is the route to take. It must be noted, however, that this will be a **seldom occurrence** and that all administrative aspects of the Code's implementation must still be expected to be followed through before the Principal makes a decision regarding the situation

5. **Stage 5: Ladder of Intervention: Suspension and/or Exclusion**
Suspension or Exclusion should be a proportionate response to the student's behaviour. The exclusion of a student is a very serious step, and one that is only taken by the Board of Management in extreme cases of unacceptable behaviour. At this stage the school will have taken significant steps to address the misbehaviour and to avoid exclusion of the student, however, it may be necessary if the School Authorities have tried a series of interventions and believe they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the student's behaviour.
A parent, or a student aged over eighteen years, may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science (Education Act 1998, Section 29).