**Anti-Bullying Policy:**

**Castlesampson N.S.,Castlesampson, Bealnamulla,**

**Athlone, Co. Roscommon.**

**Roll No. 12003V.**

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of \_Castlesampson N.S. has **adopted the following anti-bullying policy** within the framework of the school’s overall code of behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools which were published in September 2013.

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

**(a) 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 school community.

**(See Table A.)**

**(b) Effective leadership.**

**(c) A school-wide approach.**

**(d) A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact.**

**(e) Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measure) that-**

* Build empathy, respect resilience in pupils; and
* Explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying;
* Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;

**(f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils.**

**(g) Supports for staff.**

**(h) Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and**

**(i) 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:

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

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

* Deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
* Cyber-bullying and
* Identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person’s membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special education needs.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school’s code of behaviour.

However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school’s code of behaviour.

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Appendix A of this policy.

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating, and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows: Principal and class teacher. Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically at cyber-bullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows (see Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):*

**Education and prevention strategies.**

**School-wide approach.**

* A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.
* The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
* The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Pupils 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 develops an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils’ lives and the need to respond to it-prevention and intervention.
* School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community.
* Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology with the school.
* The school’s anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parent(s)/guardian(s) are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school (every year).
* The implementation of regular whole school awareness measures e.g. a dedicated notice board in the school on the promotion of friendship, and bullying prevention; annual Friendship Week and parent(s)/guardian(s) seminars; annual or term or monthly student surveys etc.
* Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way pupils will gain confidence in ‘telling’. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
* Ensuring that pupils 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.

□ Anti-bullying or Niggle box?

□ Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.

□ Administer a confidential questionnaire once a term to all pupils.

□ Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they

witness or know that bullying is taking place.

* If a parent/guardian suspects their child is being bullied they should ring the school to make an appointment to meet with child’s teacher.
* The school has an Acceptable Use Policy and use of technology is strictly monitored. Use of mobile phones by pupils is not permitted.
* The listing of supports currently being used in the school and the identification of other supports available to the school e.g Walk Talk Programme; RSE Guidelines; Alive-O; Garda Schools Programme and any others we may source in the future.

**Implementation of curricula.**

* The full implementation of the SPHE curriculum and the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.
* Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
* School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programme, Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme.
* Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programme. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardai, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying.
* The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.
* The school will implement the advice in “Sexual Orientation advice for schools” (RSE Primary, see booklet).

**Links to other policies.**

* Code of Behaviour, Child Protection policy, Supervision of pupils, Acceptable Use policy, Attendance, Sporting activities.

6. The school’s procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour are as follows:

**6.8.9. Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying.**

**The Primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame);**

**The school’s procedure must be consistent with the following approach.**

Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parent(s)guardian(s) understand this approach from the outset.

**Reporting bullying behaviour.**

* Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.
* All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
* Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants, caretakers, cleaners must report any incident of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

**Reporting and dealing with incidents:**

In investigating and dealing with bullying, the (relevant) teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;

**Investigating and dealing with incidents:**

In investigating and dealing with bullying, the (relevant) teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved:

* Parent(s)/guardian(s) and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible;
* 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 pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way;
* When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. 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 fact them from the other members of the group after the interview by the teacher. It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s).
* In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy). The school should give parent(s)/guardian(s) an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the pupils;
* Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school’s anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
* It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parent(s)/guardian(s) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school.
* In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded by the relevant teacher at Appendix 3.

**Follow up and recording.**

* In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:
* Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
* Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
* Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable;
* Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardian(s) or the school Principal or Deputy Principal.
* Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.
* Where a parent(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must be referred, as appropriate, to the school’s complaints procedures.
* In the event that a parent(s)/guardian(s) has exhausted the school’s complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

**Recording of bullying behaviour.**

It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner.

The school’s procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

**Informal-pre-determination that bullying has occurred.**

* All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. These will be kept by teacher in their diary.
* While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by 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.

**Formal Stage 1-determination that bullying has occurred**

* If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved. This is an informal record and will be retained for that school year.
* The school in consultation with the relevant teacher/s should develop a protocol for the storage of all records retained by the relevant teacher.

**Formal Stage 2-Appendix 3.**

The relevant teacher must use the recording template as **Appendix 3** to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

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

When the recording template is used, the relevant teacher will store it in the incidents and Concerns folder in the Principal’s filing cabinet. It must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal. It should be noted that the timeline for recording bullying behaviour in the recording template at Appendix 3 does not in any preclude the teacher from consulting the Principal at an earlier stage in relation to the case. Such reports will be retained .......... .

**Established intervention strategies**

* Teacher interviews with all pupils.
* Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process.
* Working with parent(s)/guardian(s) to support school interventions.
* No Blame Approach.
* Circle Time.
* Restorative interviews.
* Restorative conferencing.
* Implementing sociogram questionnaires.
* Peer mediation where suitable training has been given.
* Walk Tall Programme.
* RSE Programme.
* Stay Safe Programme.
* Alive – O.

7. The school’s programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:

* 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.

−Pastoral care system.

−Group work such as circle time.

* If pupils require counselling of further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.
* Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

8. 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. Castlesampson N.S. has a Supervision Policy and Acceptable Use Policy.

**9. Prevention of Harassment.**

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

10. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (date).

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, is readily accessible to parents and pupils on request and provided to the Parents’ Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

12. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, be readily accessible to parents and pupils (on request) and provided to the Parents’ Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(Chairperson of Board of Management) (Principal).

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date of next review: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Key elements of a positive school culture and climate**.

The school acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment.

The school acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual and his/her worth as a human being.

The school promotes positive habits of self-respect, self discipline and responsibility among all its members.

The school prohibits vulgar, offensive, sectarian or other aggressive behaviour or language by any of its members.

The school has a clear commitment to promoting equity in general and gender equity in particular in all aspects of its functioning.

The school has the capacity to change in response to pupils’ needs.

The school identifies aspects of curriculum through which positive and lasting influences can be exerted towards forming pupils’ attitudes and values.

The school takes particular care of “at risk” pupils and uses its monitoring systems to facilitate early intervention where necessary and it responds to the needs, fears or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner.

The school recognises the need to work in partnership with and keep parents informed on procedures to improve relationships on a school-wide basis.

The school recognises the role of parents in equipping the pupil with a range of life-skills.

The school recognises the role of other community agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying.

The school promotes habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the interdependence of people in groups and communities.

The school promotes qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among all its members both in school and out of school.

Staff members share a collegiate responsibility, under the direction of the Principal, to act in preventing bullying/aggressive behaviour by any member of the school community.

Appendix 2: Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate.

The following are some practical tips for immediate actions that can be taken to help build a positive school culture and climate and to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour.

Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.

Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.

Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.

Catch them being good – notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.

Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN.

Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.

Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.

Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.

Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use. Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.

Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.

Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.

All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.

Ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.

School staff can get pupils to help them to identify bullying “hot spots” and “hot times” for bullying in the school.

* Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas, changing rooms, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision.
* Hot times again tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when pupils are in the playground/school yard or moving classrooms.

Support the establishment and work of student councils.

APPENDIX A:

**Types of Bullying.**

The following are some of the types of bullying behaviour that can occur amongst pupils:

**Physical aggression:** This behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poling and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While pupils often engage in “mess fights” they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.

**Intimidation:** Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation: It may be based on the use of very aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon. Particularly upsetting can be a facial expression which conveys aggression and/or dislike.

**Isolation/exclusion and other relational bullying:** This occurs where a certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or all of the class group. This practice is usually initiated by the person engaged in bullying behaviour and can be difficult to detect. It may be accompanied by writing insulting remarks about the pupil in public places, by passing around notes about or drawings of the pupil or by whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard. Relational bullying occurs when a person’s attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. One of the most common forms includes control: “Do this or I won’t be your friend anymore” (implied or stated); a group ganging up against one person (girl or boy); non-verbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumours about a person or giving them the “silent treatment”.

**Cyber-bullying:** This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, e-mail, instant messaging (IM), apps, gaming sites, chat-rooms and other online technologies. Being the target of inappropriate or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying. As cyber-bullying uses technology to perpetrate bullying behaviour and does not require face to face contact, cyber-bullying can occur at any time (day or night). Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyber-bullying. For example, a target may be sent homophobic text messages or pictures may be posted with negative comments about a person’s sexuality, appearance etc.

**Name calling:** Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) which hurts, insults or humiliates should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name-calling of this type refers to physical appearance, e.g. size or clothes worn. Accent or distinctive voice characteristics may attract negative attention. Academic ability can also provoke name calling. This tends to operate at two extremes. There are those who are singled out for attention because they are perceived to be weak academically. At the other extreme there are those who because they are perceived as high achievers, are also targeted.

**Damage to property:** Personal property can be the focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, school books and other learning material or interference with a pupil’s locker or bicycle. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.

**Extortion:** Demands for money may be made, often accompanied by threats (sometimes carried out in the event of the targeted pupil not delivering on the demand). A pupil may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to another who is engaged in bullying behaviour.