

# Counter Bullying Policy

## Donabate Community College



This Counter Bullying Policy is to be reviewed by the Board of Management every two years.

This Counter Bullying Policy was agreed on: 29/08/2023

Signature: Adrian Henchy

(Chair Person to the Board of Management)

Principal: Anthony Creevey

Date for Review: 28/08/2024

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## Donabate Community College

### Counter Bullying Policy

#### Introduction

Our motto at Donabate Community College is ***“Ad Astra”*** and the core value of our philosophy is based on the concept of ***“Excellence through Encouragement and Effort”***.

In this context we believe that everyone in the College, both students and staff, has a right to a safe, respectful and caring environment, which is free from threats, fear, harassment or intimidation. The purpose of this policy is to protect these rights and ensure that the College community is made aware that bullying will not be tolerated in any form.

The policy, therefore, is to protect all members of our College community from being bullied (students, staff including teachers and other people working in the College and parents/guardians.) In September 1993, the DES issued ***Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour in Primary & Post Primary Colleges. These guidelines stated:***

*“The role of the College is to protect the highest possible standard of education for all its pupils. A stable secure learning environment is an essential require to achieve this goal. Bullying behaviour, by its very nature, undermines and dilutes the quality of education and imposes psychological damage. As such, it is an issue, which must be positively and firmly addressed through a range of College-based measures and strategies through which all members of the College community are enabled to act effectively in dealing with this behaviour”.*

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the National Educational Welfare Board, the Board of Management of Donabate Community College has adopted the following Counter Bullying Policy within the framework of the College’s overall Code of Positive Behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Colleges* which were published in September 2013.

In accordance with the requirements of the Children First Act 2015, Children First: National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017, the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Colleges 2017 and Tusla Guidance on the preparation of Child Safeguarding Statements, the Board of Management of Donabate Community College reviews the Child Safeguarding Statement on an annual basis. The Principal reports all Child Welfare Concerns including bullying at each Board Meeting.

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

- A positive College 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 College community.
  
- Effective Leadership
- A College-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 and
  - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based
  
- Effective supervision and monitoring of students
- Supports for staff
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies) and
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the Counter-Bullying Policy.

## **Definition**

In accordance with the “*Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Colleges*”, 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 the person’s membership of the Traveller community and bullying to those with disabilities or additional/special educational needs.

Isolated or once-off incidents or 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 College’s Code of Positive Behaviour.

However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful 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 College's Code of Positive Behaviour.

### **Types of Bullying**

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

- **Physical Aggression:** This behaviour included pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While students 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, clothes worn etc. 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 are perceived as high achievers who 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, College books and other learning material or interference with a student's locker or bicycle. The contents of College bags and pencil cases 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 student not delivering on the demand). A student may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to another who is engaged in bullying behaviour.

- **Bullying of College Personnel**

Bullying of College personnel by means of physical assault, damage to property, verbal abuse, threats to people's families etc.

- **Teacher Behaviour** - A teacher may, unwittingly or otherwise, engage in, instigate or reinforce bullying behaviour in a number of ways:
  - Using sarcasm or other insulting or demeaning forms of language when addressing pupils; making negative comments about a pupil's appearance or background;
  - Humiliating directly or indirectly, a pupil who is particularly academically weak or outstanding, or vulnerable in other ways;
  - Using any gesture or expression of a threatening or intimidatory nature, or any form of degrading physical contact or exercise.

### Links to Other Policies & Procedures

- Code of Positive Behaviour
- Child Safeguarding Statement\*
- Internet Safety – Acceptable Usage Policy
- Health & Safety
- SPHE / Lifeskills & RSE
- Guidance Plan
- Learning Support
- Admissions & Participation Policy
- Induction of New Staff

### **\*Child Safeguarding Statement**

The Child Protection Statement outlines how the College manages all welfare concerns including bullying.

The Child Protection Statement will

- recognise that the protection and welfare of children is of paramount importance, regardless of all other considerations;
- fully comply with its statutory obligations under the Children First Act 2015 and other legislation relating to the protection and welfare of children;
- fully co-operate with the relevant statutory authorities in relation to child protection and welfare matters
- adopt safe practices to minimise the possibility of harm or accidents happening to children and protect workers from the necessity to take unnecessary risks that may leave themselves open to accusations of abuse or neglect;
- develop a practice of openness with parents and encourage parental involvement in the education of their children; and
- fully respect confidentiality requirements in dealing with child protection matters.

The College will also adhere to the above principles in relation to any adult pupil with a special vulnerability.

### **Relevant teacher(s) for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying**

A consistent and clear approach to dealing with bullying when it occurs is the appropriate response in Donabate Community College.

A student or parent may bring a bullying concern to any member of staff in the College. In the case where a student is being bullied, he or she can approach the following people:

- Class Tutor
- Assistant Year
- Head Year Head
- Guidance
- Counsellor
- Chaplain
- Any member of the staff with whom the student feels comfortable
- Principal or Deputy Principal.

Students may choose to report a bullying incident(s) a Mentor or Prefect from the Student Leadership Programme. In this event, the senior students, who have undergone training, will assist the student(s) concerned with the referral to staff. Some student may wish to tell their parent(s)/guardian(s) who, in turn, will contact the class tutor or other members of the care team as outlined above.

## **Implementation of Education and Prevention Strategies (including awareness raising)**

This policy addresses bullying behaviour, harassment and sexual harassment. The policy applies:

- During College time (including breaks)
- Going to and from the College
- During College trips and tours
- During extra-curricular activities
- To any behaviour of a bullying nature (outside the College) that seriously impacts on a students' participation in College and/or where the matter relates to the College's duty of care of a student.

### **Preventative Strategy**

The College will work proactively to ensure as far as it can that bullying does not take place. Bullying can be prevented by raising awareness of all in the College community about the reality of bullying and its detrimental effects. The College uses the following approaches.

- The Counter bullying Policy is an integral part of our College's pastoral system and our Code of Positive Behaviour.
- Teachers regularly stress to students the importance of reporting matters of concern and by extension, it is considered everyone's duty to be mindful and report any behaviour that is inappropriate.
- The Mentor Programme encourages and teaches first year students the importance of reporting matters of concern.
- It is made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying, they are not telling tales but behaving responsibly. Moreover, we make it clear that remaining silent very often compounds the situation and can unwittingly send the wrong message to the bully.
- The College seeks opportunities to enhance the self-worth of all pupils.
- The College provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities that are open to all pupils.
- Teachers use aspects of the curriculum to raise awareness of the inappropriateness of bullying behaviour in a wide range of subjects.
- Opportunities are provided regularly for staff training.
- Students will be regularly surveyed about their class spirit, friendship groups etc. A programme of Counter Bullying Workshops is arranged for each 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> Year classes by a senior member of staff as part of overall Pastoral Care (S.P.H.E. – *Social Personal & Health Education Programme, Senior Lifeskills and Relationships & Sexuality Education*). The themes from these workshops are explored further in SPHE classes.
- At Care Meetings, issues relating to our Code of Positive Behaviour (including our Policy on Counter-bullying) are discussed and reviewed on a regular basis.



- A number of initiatives involving student leadership are proactively used to counter bullying behaviour. These initiatives include a Buddy System, Friendship Days, Outdoor Activities, Cyber Bullying Workshops, marking International Day against Homophobia etc. These activities provide important opportunities for students to role model appropriate behaviour etc.
- The Senior Management Team links closely with the Parents' Association to arrange a programme of talks and workshops for parents that address this and related topics.
- Parents and pupils are regularly advised that they may use the Guidance Services and the Chaplaincy Service in the College if they have any concerns in the understanding that they will be listened to and advised in a supportive environment. Parents are made aware of the counselling service through public meeting and our website. Students are regularly reminded of the services that they can avail of through both services.

### **Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying –Guidelines for Staff**

All interviews are conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils involved.

- The first thing to do is to assure the student that the problem lies with the bully and not with them. This removes the shame many people feel when they are bullied.
- A written record of the incidents is kept with date, time, people and brief details. This record will be filed and stored safely.

Should a teacher come across an incident of bullying behaviour, the following procedure should be followed:

1. Speak separately to the person who appears to be bullying, the person who appears to be the victim and if possible somebody not directly involved, but who saw what happened. It can be useful to get all those involved to write an account of what happened. This is best done in private. The rights of all students will be respected and a fair hearing will be given to all students.

Students are told that if they are involved in bullying the following will happen:

- If they are involved, they will be warned to stop.
  - Furthermore their parent(s)/guardian(s) may be informed.
  - Subsequent sanctions may include suspension or the Board of Management being notified.
  - The College recognises the importance of providing the necessary support structures to a student(s) involved in bullying in order that they can move forward.
2. If the teacher considers the incident to be serious, it is written down on a Bullying Incident Form and also reported to the Year head or the Deputy Principal /Principal.

3. The Year head or the Deputy Principal /Principal will make contact with the parents if they consider it necessary. This contact is recorded on the Bullying Incident Form
4. The teacher should assure the person who has been the victim of bullying of on-going support with the encouragement to report back any further attempts at intimidation.
5. Speak to the student(s) who have allegedly instigated the bullying and inform her/him/them firmly but in a non-aggressive manner that such behaviour will not be tolerated. Remind her/him of the existing Code of Positive Behaviour they she/he signed when enrolling in the College. Remind them that there are pastoral supports for them in the College to assist them with the situation.
6. The student who has been the victim of bullying should be kept informed of all developments after the incident(s) have been reported and of any further action that is going to ensue. Where appropriate the College will endeavour to keep them involved in the decision-making process. Moreover, the College will keep the student's Parent(s)/Guardian(s) informed.
7. Teachers will consult with colleagues when situations arise to gather pertinent information, inform relevant personnel and engage with the Pastoral Care Team.

### **Programme of Support for Students affected by Bullying**

- The student that has experienced bullying will receive the utmost privacy and confidentiality at all times.
- The student will be given the opportunity to meet with a member of the Guidance Team.
- The College continues to raise awareness and address on a regular basis student attitudes to bullying ~ in class, at assemblies, the conducting of questionnaires etc. This will be further supported by the delivery of Counter Bullying Workshops, Cyber Bullying Workshops etc. The topic is incorporated into the pastoral programmes delivered in the College.
- Following any incident of bullying, the behaviour and progress of all students involved will be closely monitored. Staff will be informed of any developments and will be asked to monitor and observe the students, complete the Class Observation Sheet and pass on these observations to the Care Team.
- Parent(s)/ Guardian(s) will be informed of serious incidents and if necessary, may be required to assist in the restorative based approach to resolving the matter.

### **Supervision & 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.

## Prevention of Harassment

The Board of Management confirms that the College will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent 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.

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

This policy has been made available to College personnel, published on the College's website and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education & Skills and Dublin & Dun Laoghaire ETB if requested.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every College year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to College personnel, published on the College website and provided to the Parents' Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to Dublin & Dun Laoghaire ETB and the Department of Education & Skills.

**Signed:** Adrian Henchy

**Signed:** Anthony Creevey

Chairperson  
Board of Management

Principal  
Secretary to Board of Management

**Date:** 11/02/2020

**Date:** 11/02/2020

**Date of next review:** November 2021

## Appendices

- Appendix 1: Key Elements of a Positive College Culture & Climate
- Appendix 2: Practical tips for building a positive College culture and climate.
- Appendix 3: Serious Incident Report
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- Appendix 5: Class Observation Sheet
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- Appendix 7: Checklist for Annual Review of the Counter-bullying Policy and its implementation
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## **Appendix 1: Key Elements of a Positive College Culture & Climate**

- The College acknowledges the right of each member of the College community to enjoy College in a secure environment.
- The College acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual and his/her worth as a human being.
- The College promotes positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among all its members.
- The College prohibits vulgar, offensive, sectarian or other aggressive behaviour or language by any of its members.
- The College has a clear commitment to promoting equality in general and gender equity in particular in all aspects of its functioning.
- The College has the capacity to change in response to students' needs.
- The College identifies aspects of the curriculum through which positive and lasting influences can be exerted towards forming students' attitudes and values.
- The College takes particular care of "at risk" students 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 College recognises the need to work.

## **Appendix 2: Practical tips for building a positive College culture & climate.**

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

- Model respectful behaviour to all members of the College 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 College.
- Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the College. 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 College – 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 College rules and routines.
- Explicitly teach pupils to comply with the College rules on mobile phone and internet use. Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.
- Actively involve parents and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around the social media.
- Actively promote the right of every member of the College community to be safe and secure in College.
- Highlight and explicitly teach College 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 outdoor supervision.
- College staff can get pupils to help them identify 'hot spots' and 'hot times' for bullying in the College.
  - Hot spots tend to be in the playground/College 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 outside or moving classrooms.
- Support the establishment and work of student council

## Appendix 3: Serious Incident Report Form



### Serious Incident Report Form

Pupil's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Tutor Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Day & Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Time & Location: \_\_\_\_\_

#### Category of Incident

- |                          |                          |                     |                          |                           |                          |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Bullying                 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Disrespect to Staff | <input type="checkbox"/> | Threat                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Bullying<br>(Appearance) | <input type="checkbox"/> | Isolation/Exclusion | <input type="checkbox"/> | Verbal                    | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Bullying (Family)        | <input type="checkbox"/> | Homophobic          | <input type="checkbox"/> | Violence                  | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Cyber-bullying           | <input type="checkbox"/> | Racist              | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other (please<br>specify) | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Damage to Property       | <input type="checkbox"/> | Sexist              | <input type="checkbox"/> |                           |                          |

#### Details of Incident:

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Reporting Teacher's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Reporting teacher please forward this form to relevant year head with student accounts.**

#### Action Taken

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_





**Appendix 4: Serious Incident Report /Student’s Account Form**

**Student’s Account**

Student’s Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Tutor Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Day & Date: \_\_\_\_\_



**Details of Incident:**

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Student’s Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

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

## Appendix 5: Class Observation Sheet

### Class Observation Sheet

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Date	Class Time	Room	Name of Student	Behaviour	Directed Towards

Additional Comments:

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Please return the above form to:

## Appendix 6: Student Questionnaire – Counter Bullying

Donabate Community College

### Counter Bullying Questionnaire

The information you give on this questionnaire will be treated confidentially.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Rang: \_\_\_\_\_

1. Are you happy with the atmosphere in your class?

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2. Who are your friends?

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3. Are you feeling under pressure in any way?

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4. Is any student in your class having a hard time? Explain.

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5. Is any student being left out or ignored?

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6. Is any student spreading rumours, gossip, using notes, phone calls, text messages, emails etc. to make others to feel bad about themselves?

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7. Is any student being unfair to others?

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8. Is there a group of students making life difficult for others?

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9. Are students from other classes giving any student in this class a difficult time?

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10. Who do you think is causing the problem?

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11. What can you do to help students that are having a difficult time?

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12. Have you contributed to anything that would isolate any student or make them feel uncomfortable?

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***Thank you for completing this questionnaire.***

## Appendix 7: Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation

The Board of Management must undertake an annual review of the College's counter-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 College'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 Anti-bullying procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Colleges?	
Has the board published the policy on the College website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to College staff (including new staff)?	
Is the Board satisfied that the College 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?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the College applies?	
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the principal?	
Has the Board discussed how well the College 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?	
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the College's handling of bullying incidents?	
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the College citing dissatisfaction with the College's handling of a bullying situation.	
Have any Ombudsman for children investigations into the College's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	
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?	
Has the Board identified any aspects of the College's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix 8: Notification regarding the Board of Management’s review of the anti-bullying policy**

To \_\_\_\_\_

The Board of Management of \_\_\_\_\_ wishes to inform you that:

- The Board of Management’s annual review of the College’s anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of \_\_\_\_\_(date)
- 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 College.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Principal