Introductory Statement

This policy has been developed in line with our mission statement, which has at its core, care of the student. As a caring school community, we hold that all bullying behaviour that is persistent and pervasive is unacceptable.

Scope

The Policy is based on the Department of Education's definition of bullying behaviour. Bullying is repeated aggression conducted by an individual or a group against others – such aggressive behaviour may be verbal, psychological or physical (DES).

- **H: Hurtful**
- **A: Aggressive**
- **R: Repeated**
- **D: Deliberate**

The Policy applies to students, teaching staff and other school staff, parents and guardians and others insofar as measures under the policy can relate to them.
This will include:

- School time
- School trips and tours
- Extra curricular activities

Rationale

We are forming this policy:

- As a follow on from the cool school initiative.
- In Pobalscoil Neasáin, it is believed that both students and staff have the right to conduct their work without interference in a safe, respectful and caring environment.
- The policy is part of our code of discipline.
- It is a legal requirement.

Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School (School's mission/vision/aims)

Our mission statement states that in partnership between staff, students and parents we aim 'to foster the holistic development of *all* our students in a **supportive**, **safe** environment of mutual **respect** which develops the uniqueness of each student.' Bullying damages the holistic development of a person. This school is committed to creating a supportive and safe environment where bullying is not accepted or tolerated.

Goals/Objectives

1. To create a school ethos which encourages students to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour
2. To raise awareness of bullying as an unacceptable form of behaviour with school management, teachers, students, parents/guardians.
3. To create a school ethos that acknowledges, accommodates and respects a diversity of students across the nine grounds covered by the equality legislation. (Gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, traveller community).
4. To ensure that the school's Social, Personal and Health Education raises awareness of the factors associated with bullying behaviour and develops appropriate knowledge, skills and behaviour.

5. To take practical actions to prevent incidents of bullying behaviour e.g. to ensure comprehensive supervision and monitoring measures through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation.
6. To develop procedures for reporting and recording incidents of bullying behaviour.
7. To develop procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.
8. To develop a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and those involved in bullying behaviour.
9. To work with, and through, the various local agencies in countering all forms of bullying and anti-social behaviour.

Key Measures (Content of Policy)

What is bullying?
Bullying is indirect or direct repeated aggression/agitation, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual/group towards another.

Types of bullying

General
- 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
- Graffiti
- Extortion
- Intimidation
- Gestures which can convey intimidatory and frightening messages
- The "look"
- Invasion of personal space
- Playing nasty jokes to embarrass and humiliate
- Mimicking
- A combination of any of the types listed

Cyber
- Silent telephone/mobile phone call
- Abusive or unwelcome telephone/mobile phone calls
- Abusive or unwelcome text messages
- Abusive or unwelcome email

Abusive website comments/blogs/pictures

Homophobic
- Exclusion and Negative discrimination of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans-sexual learners.
- Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation
- Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian, transsexual.
- Any language, action or belief that encourages prejudices in others.

Racial
- Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background

Relational
This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying.
Behaviours include:
- Malicious gossip
- Isolation & exclusion
- Ignoring
- Excluding from the group
- Intentionally taking someone's friend away
- "Bitching"
- Lying and spreading rumours
- Breaking confidence
- Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear
- The "look"

Sexual
- Unwelcome sexual comments or touching
- Harassment

Preventative Measures

Any measures taken to prevent bullying should be supported by the following:
- An Anti-Bullying Policy drawn up in consultation with all the partners, e.g. Care Team/Staff; Student Council; Parents/ Board of Management.
- The Anti-Bullying Policy should be communicated to all the partners-especially the staff and students.
- Staff who report problems should be supported.
- Sanctions should be imposed on the bully; the victim should be supported and the bully should be rehabilitated.
- Problems must be acted upon and there must be accountability.
- The physical aspects of the school should be reviewed with view to eliminating problem areas.

Preventative Measures

Here in PSN we aim to raise awareness by:
- Including in anti-bullying lessons in SPHE/ tutorial classes practical tips and strategies for dealing with bullying. See RUBN Bullied. (Cool School Programme)
- Publishing and publicising Anti-Bullying charter to all, staff, parents and students.
- Supervise and monitor and evaluate the progress of the Policy and any programmes implemented.
- Introduce Friendship Week/School Spirit Week*
- Introduce an Anti-bullying art competition (open to all age-groups)
- Post main points of Anti-Bullying Policy in a prominent place in each classroom.
- Post anti-bullying slogans/messages/ from art competition in strategic places in classrooms and around the school.
- Organise an Information Evening for parents on the theme of Bullying (Possible topics might include promoting message against bullying in the home, school community, internet and mobile phones).
- Ensure parents and students sign Code of Discipline and School's Anti-Bullying policy in the school journal.
- Enlist the help of the Students' Council and Prefects to be the eyes and ears at potential "hot spots" in the school and to assist in the mentoring of first year students. Step up corridor supervision by staff especially in "hotspots".

***Friendship Week/ School Spirit Week**

Friendship Week should be an annual event and should incorporate the core strategy of the Anti-Bullying Policy. It will include:
- Teaching anti-bullying lessons across the curriculum.
- Administration of the anti- bullying questionnaire (P81)
- Seminar for parents
- Anti-bullying activities (P94-101-e.g. art mural based on mutual respect)
- Anti-bullying drama (e.g. Humourfit Theatre Company)

Procedures for reporting bullying incidents

Who To Tell:
Students are strongly encouraged to report incidents of alleged bullying to one or more of the following:
- Tutor,
- Year Head,
- Chaplain,
- Counsellor,
- or any staff member with whom the student feels comfortable,
- prefects or members of the student council.

How To Tell:
- Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time.
- A parent or friend may tell on behalf of the student.
- Phone call, letter or note with homework.
- Students are encouraged by Year Heads at assemblies, and by tutors in Tutorial classes to report isolated incidents of bullying behaviour or harassment.
- A confidential questionnaire to be administered twice, yearly, to Junior Cycle students by the class tutor.
- The confidence factor is of vital importance.

Noting and Recording:
- Disclosures of bullying should be recorded, investigated and dealt with by teachers in the incident report form.
- The Year Head will keep the incident report forms.
- Reports must be kept for five years after the student leaves the school.
- These files may be accessed under the freedom of information act.

Dealing With Reported Incidents:

If there is not clear evidence of bullying the use of a **Bullying Sociogram form**, (see attached) is an effective strategy to establish the class dynamic.
Class observation, whereby all subject teachers over a period of two weeks monitor peer behaviour, and pool the information, is a useful strategy to identify pupils who need support including those engaged in questionable behaviour. It provides management and parents with accurate information about bullying.

1. Initial report/disclosure of bullying behaviour (H.A.R.D.)

Action taken by	Procedure	Support and/or sanction *may* include
Subject teacher or any teacher. Member of the Student Support Team If the teacher feels that they can resolve the situation.	Speak to both students separately and try to resolve the issue using the Cool School Approach. Keep a record. Teacher will follow up progress with: victim and bully, bystanders or others involved. Phone or a note in journal will inform parents at this point.	Serious talk with student(s) re effects of their behaviour. Challenge the behaviour as being unacceptable. Verbal warning. Student/s involved warned to stop. Seek verbal agreement re future behaviour. Outline a fair outcome *if appropriate:* e.g. an apology, return of property etc.

2.Subsequent report /disclosure

Action taken by	Procedure	Support and/or sanction *may* include:
Year Head involved Member of the Student Support Team may be involved.	Incident investigated by the Year Head. Principal/ Deputy principal informed. Both sets of parents informed by the Year Head and involved in the resolution. Keep a record. Year Head follows up progress with victim and bully, bystanders or others involved.	Serious talk with the student re: behaviour and future behaviour. Sign written agreement re future behaviour. Parents/Guardians sign written agreement re future behaviour. Speak with school counsellor. Detention /other agreed sanction as per the school's Code of Discipline Monitor future behaviour.

3.Where bullying behaviour persists / serious incident of bullying

Action taken by	Procedure	Support and/or Sanction
Principal or Deputy Principal involved Student Support Team may be involved. The incident may be referred to the Board of Management at the discretion of the Principal.	Parents and student meet with Principal / Deputy Principal. Use Cool School Restorative Approach Feedback to Year Head. Record kept. Follow up progress with victim and bully, bystanders or others involved and continue to monitor the situation.	Detention / Suspension / other agreed sanction from school's Code of Behaviour. Parents are met and conditions set regarding student's future behaviour. Counselling may be suggested Referral to child psychologist/ Garda Juvenile Liaison Officer. Contact with other support agencies e.g. re anger management (St. Benedict's Family Centre, Kilbarrick, Ardúna, Clontarf) The future of the student in the school may be considered.

Note:
All serious incidents of bullying (e.g. an assault or long term exclusion) should be reported to the Principal straight away.

Links to other policies
Code of Discipline
Child Protection
Health and Safety
SPHE/RSE
Admissions Policy
Critical Incidence Policy
Internet Safety

Curriculum Delivery
SPHE/RSE

CSPE

Transition Year (Drama workshops, and other extra curricular programmes, e.g., Aware,

Monday Blues, Mental Health Issues and Personal Care)

Implementation Arrangements, Roles and Responsibilities

Principal will co-ordinate implementation of the policy.

Cool school committee consult all the partners, students, parents and staff in the formulation of

the draft report.

Principal to table the policy to staff for discussion.

Principal to table the policy to BOM for discussion and ratification.

Ratification and Communication

Once ratified by BOM the policy becomes the agreed school's Anti-Bullying Policy.
The policy has then to be circulated within the school community.
 Parents/guardians to be informed of the Anti-bullying policy and will be asked to sign the policy, and agree to be bound by it.

Ratified by the Board of Management : 11/3/2008

Monitoring the Implementation of the Policy

Reviewing and Evaluating the Policy: 2011