



Policy name	Virginia College Antbullying Policy
School name	Virginia College
Date of ratification of policy by the board of management	5 th November 2024
Date of scheduled review of policy by board of management	November 2026
Signature chair board of management	
Engagement with student council	October 2024
Engagement with parents (association)	October 2024
Engagement with staff	August 2024

Mission Statement: Tús Feasa Fiafraí

Faithful to our motto, Virginia College is committed to providing quality teaching in a safe and positive learning environment. Whilst fostering academic and personal achievement, we aim to nurture an educational community of informed, responsible and caring citizens for an ever-changing world.

Contents

Introduction	4
Commitment to key principles of best practice.....	4
School Ethos.....	5
Anti Bullying Policy Aims.....	5
Definition of Bullying	6
Types of Bullying	7
Impacts of Bullying Behaviour	8
Policy Implementation: Investigation, Follow-up, Intervention and Recording	9
Specific Roles and Responsibilities	9
Procedures for Investigating Allegations of Bullying Behaviour	10
Initial Report	10
Procedures and Strategies for dealing with Bullying Behaviour.....	12
Procedure for dealing with bullying behaviour	13
Referral of Serious Cases to the HSE.....	15
Programme of Supports for working with students affected by bullying.....	15
Education and prevention strategies.....	16
Communication with Student and Parents.....	17
Prevention of Harassment	18
Students with AEN	19
Yearly Events	19
Culture of Telling.....	19
Supervision and Monitoring of Anti-Bullying in Virginia College.....	20
Policy Adoption and Review	21
Policy Dissemination and Publication	21

Policy Review21

Appendix22

Appendix 1 – Graphic – How to Report Bullying – Teacher Procedure22

Appendix 2 – Graphic – How to Report Bullying – Parent Procedure22

Appendix 3 – Graphic – How to Report Bullying – Overview23

Appendix 4 – Graphic – How to Report Bullying – Student23

Appendix 5 AB1 – Referral Form.....24

Appendix 6 - Incident Report form to be completed by student.27

Appendix 7 – AB2 Form28

Appendix 8 – Case File Checklist.....32

Appendix 9 – AB3 Form - Following up on Bullying Behaviour33

Appendix 10 - Checklist for Annual Review of the Anti-bullying Policy and its implementation35

Introduction

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 Virginia 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 September 2013.

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

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

The Board of Management of Virginia College adopts the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools issued by the Department of Education and Skills (September 2013) as the basis for the way in which Virginia College community addresses the issue of bullying.

Commitment to key principles of best practice

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

1. A positive school culture and climate which:
 - a. is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity.
 - b. encourages students and staff to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
 - c. promotes respectful relationships across the school community.
2. Effective leadership.
3. A school-wide approach.
4. A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact.
5. Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that:

- a. build empathy, respect and resilience in students.
 - b. Explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying.
 - c. including in particular homophobic and transphobic bullying.
6. Effective supervision and monitoring of students.
 7. Supports for staff.
 8. Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies) and
 9. On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

School Ethos

Virginia College Mission Statement is: Tús Feasa Fiafraí. Faithful to our motto, Virginia College is committed to providing quality teaching in a safe and positive learning environment. Whilst fostering academic and personal achievement, we aim to nurture an educational community of informed, responsible and caring citizens for an ever-changing world.

Anti Bullying Policy Aims

“An Anti-Bullying Policy, when developed and implemented across the school community can be the cornerstone in countering bullying behaviour in schools” (DES, 2013).

The main aims of this Anti-Bullying Policy are as follows:

1. To create a positive school culture and climate that is inclusive and welcoming of difference
2. To create a school climate that is open, supportive and encourages pupils to disclose and discuss bullying behaviour
3. To raise awareness amongst the entire school community that bullying is unacceptable behaviour
4. To provide procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying behaviour
5. To provide procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour
6. To develop a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour
7. To work with and through external agencies in countering all forms of bullying and anti-social behaviour;
8. To facilitate ongoing reflection and evaluation of the effectiveness of the school’s Anti-Bullying Policy.

Definition of Bullying

It is common during normal interaction for pupils to tease and taunt each other. Teenagers struggle to find their place in their world and sometimes to achieve dominance. Quite often, they say hurtful things and behave in hurtful ways. Other times they are insensitive to the feelings of others. They also can behave very differently in groups than they do as individuals, especially if they have an appreciative audience. Teenagers are as fallible and imperfect as the rest of the human population. In most interactions, there is a balance of power between parties and therefore no culpability. However, at a certain point, usually when there is an imbalance of power between parties, teasing and taunting may become forms of bullying behaviour.

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. (DES, 2013)

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 educational needs.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition 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**. This may involve trying different interventions, application of the school's Code of Conduct (up to and including suspension and exclusion), or referral to outside agencies

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 Section 2 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

Types of Bullying

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

<i>Type</i>	<i>Explanation & Specific Examples of Behaviour (non-exhaustive)</i>
Physical Aggression	Pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking, tripping people, inflicting pain...etc. Severe Physical Assault
Intimidation	Very aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon Facial expression which conveys aggression and/or dislike
Isolation/exclusion	This occurs where a certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or all of a group. ¹ Other accompanying behaviours include; writing insulting remarks about a student in public places, passing around notes about or drawings of the student, whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard...etc.
Relational Bullying	This occurs when a person's attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. This can happen by the student(s) engaged in the bullying behaviour controlling friendships, non-verbal gesturing, malicious gossip, spreading rumours about a person, giving a person the 'silent-treatment',....etc.
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, email, instant messaging (IM), apps, gaming sites, chat-rooms and other online technologies.
Name calling	Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) which hurts, insults or humiliates e.g. with reference to physical appearance, accent, distinctive characteristics...etc.
Damage to property	Damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, school books, learning materials, pupils locker, bicycle...etc.
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.

¹ This practice is usually initiated by the person engaged in bullying behaviour and can be very difficult to detect.

Identity-Based	Bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person’s membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs
----------------	--

Impacts of Bullying Behaviour

<u>Pupil</u>	<u>Possible Impacts may include:</u>
Pupils who are being bullied	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ May develop feelings of insecurity, humiliation and extreme anxiety and thus may become more vulnerable ➤ Lowering of self-esteem ➤ Changes in mood and behaviour ➤ Extreme cases may result in self-harm
Pupils who witness bullying	<p>Pupils who witness bullying may also be affected and may suffer in similar ways to those who are bullied. For example, pupils who witness identity-based bullying and share that identity can experience anxiety and feel under threat themselves.</p> <p>Pupils may also feel guilt or distress at not being able to help the person being bullied.</p>
Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Can be at higher risk of depression ➤ Increased risk of developing an anti-social personality ➤ Anxiety disorders ➤ Likelihood of substance abuse, law-breaking behaviour in adulthood, decreased educational attainment, decreased occupational attainment...etc.

Policy Implementation: Investigation, Follow-up, Intervention and Recording

Specific Roles and Responsibilities

It must be stated explicitly that the role of parents and students in the implementation of the Anti-Bullying Policy is of paramount importance. The Anti-Bullying Policy, operating within the overall framework of the Code of Conduct, can either reinforce positive efforts or help counteract unsuccessful attempts *of parents* to change unacceptable behaviour (DES, 2013). **Parents and students have a particularly important role and responsibility** in helping the school to prevent and address school-based bullying behaviour and to deal with any negative impact within the school of bullying that occurs elsewhere.

The term *relevant teacher* is used by the DES to describe the person(s) specifically responsible for investigating and dealing with allegations of bullying behaviour. Consequently, a relevant teacher will investigate an allegation, decide whether the behaviour is bullying in nature, and deal with bullying behaviour. They will also support the students and parents to the best of their ability. The *“primary aim of the relevant teacher 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)”* (DES, 2013). In Virginia College, the relevant teachers make up the Anti-Bullying Team.

The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows: (see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):

- Principal
- Deputy Principal
- Year Heads
- Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

Students, parents, non-teaching staff, visitors or members of the wider community should feel welcome to report any concerns regarding bullying behaviour to any member of school staff.

- Reports can be submitted through <https://www.virginiacollege.ie/report-a-concern>
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

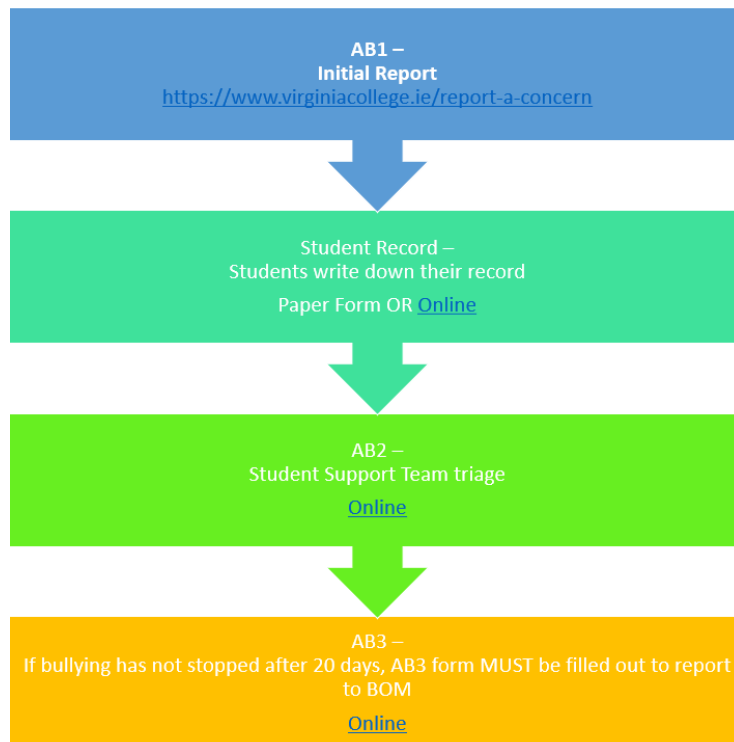
- The member of staff should inform any member of the Anti-Bullying team at the earliest opportunity.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated, and dealt with by the relevant teacher.

The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are included in the following sections.

Procedures for Investigating Allegations of Bullying Behaviour

Initial Report

All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teachers.



The following procedure serves to guide relevant teachers through the process of investigating allegations of bullying behaviour. Investigations can take a considerable amount of time.

- Initially, the relevant teacher will gather as much information as possible regarding the allegation of bullying behaviour. This usually involves speaking directly with the student who alleges the bullying behaviour. The student(s) will be requested to give a verbal and/or written account of the incident(s) on a paper Form OR [online](#)
- The relevant teacher will also speak with the student(s) against whom the allegation of bullying behaviour has been made. The relevant teacher may speak to students individually or in groups depending on the nature of the allegation. The student(s) will be requested to give a verbal and/or written account of the incident(s)
- Where possible, allegation/incidents are investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved. However, considering the fact that all students and teachers are fully timetabled, the student(s) will usually have to leave a lesson or to be excused from a lesson in order to meet/speak with a relevant teacher. This will be facilitated as discretely as possible but total discretion is very difficult to realise in a live school environment
- All investigations will be conducted with sensitivity and due regard to all the students concerned
- When investigating allegations of bullying behaviour or incidents, 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 with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner
- It will be made clear to students that when they provide information, they are not considered to be 'telling tales' but are behaving responsibly and that the well-being of other students is dependent on them reporting such behaviour
- The relevant teacher may consult with any staff member or other persons during the course of their investigation in order to seek guidance or further relevant information
- The relevant teacher may seek the assistance and support of a tutor, the learning support teacher, Guidance Counsellor, the Deputy Principal or the Principal at any time. The Year head of the student(s) involved may be able to provide more detailed information about the students. The Principal and Deputy Principal have a whole-school perspective and are privy to certain information about students. It would be considered prudent of the relevant teacher(s) to consult with them before taking any action in relation to bullying behaviour. This consultation may take place informally at any time but will usually take place at the weekly meeting of the Anti-Bullying team/Student Support Team

- Where the relevant teacher is concerned that a particular allegation of bullying is causing serious upset to a student, staff member or other person, then they should bring it to the attention of the Principal or Deputy Principal at the earliest opportunity
- The relevant teacher should complete a record of investigation form called [AB2 – Student Support Team Triage form](#)
- The relevant teacher will report on their investigation at the weekly Student Support Team/Anti-Bullying team meeting
- The relevant teachers will exercise their professional judgement to determine (by consensus) whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved
- If the relevant teachers determines that bullying has not occurred, then the relevant teacher will consult with the student(s) and Student Support Team involved in order to provide support and guidance
- If the relevant teachers determines that bullying behaviour has occurred, then the relevant teacher will also complete the recording template form so that the Anti-Bullying team may deal with the bullying.
- All forms must be completed in full and maintained in accordance with the relevant data protection legislation.

[Procedures and Strategies for dealing with Bullying Behaviour](#)

The Board of Management of Virginia College adopts the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* issued by the Department of Education and Skills (September 2013) as the basis for the way in which the school addresses the issue of bullying. The primary aim in 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). Virginia College reserves the right to investigate allegations of bullying and to take disciplinary action where necessary.

Procedure for dealing with bullying behaviour

In any case where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred:

- The relevant teacher will record the bullying behaviour and any actions taken/follow-up, using the standardised recording template form [AB2 – Student Support Team Triage form](#) and report on the issue/any follow-up at the weekly Anti-Bullying/Student Support team meeting
- All records are stored under lock and key in the Deputy Principals office when completed. A case file check list will be included in each file. The case file is held in the DPs office for a period of 7 years.
- The parents of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and to explain the actions being taken (by reference to the policy)
- The relevant teacher(s) will make it clear to the student(s) engaged in bullying behaviour, that they have breached the Anti-Bullying Policy. The relevant teacher(s) will also make reasonable efforts to get the student(s) who have engaged in the bullying behaviour to try to see the situation from the perspective of the student who is being bullied
- The student(s) who is/are engaging in bullying behaviour will be instructed that the behaviour must cease immediately and that their behaviour will be monitored carefully for 20 days (school days). If the student(s) engages in bullying behaviour during the 20 days, then the case will move to AB3 level, and will be reported by the Principal to the Board of Management at the next meeting of the Board. The relevant teacher will also inform the parent/guardian of this.
- The relevant teacher will use their professional judgement to select the most appropriate evidence-based intervention strategy in order to resolve issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved. Where no relationship existed between the students prior to the bullying behaviour, then a restorative approach would not be appropriate

List of possible evidence-based intervention strategies

1. Clear instruction to student to cease bullying behaviours
2. Implementation of Code of Conduct
3. Strengthening the Victim
4. Mediation
5. Restorative Practice

6. Support-Group Method
7. Method of Shared Concern/ No Blame Approach: 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
8. Working with parent(s)/guardian(s) to support school interventions
9. Implementing sociogram questionnaires

- In some instances, the only intervention is that a clear instruction is communicated to the student(s) engaged in the bullying behaviour to cease immediately, and no intervention strategy is implemented. An example of when this would occur is if the student being bullied does not want to engage in an intervention strategy.
- The relevant teacher may seek guidance or assistance from the Student Support/Anti-Bullying team at any stage.
- The relevant teacher(s) will implement the chosen intervention strategy. It will be made clear to all involved (each set of students and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the student being disciplined, his/her parents and the school.
- As a follow-up to the implementation of an intervention strategy, the relevant teacher (s) will meet separately with the relevant parties to review progress.
- Subsequently, but only if the student who has been bullied is ready and agreeable, the Anti-Bullying team will give consideration to organising further follow-up, restorative meetings between both parties as this can have a therapeutic effect.
- 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; and
 - ✓ Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the Principal or Deputy Principal

- In the case of physical aggression or assault, the relevant teacher will inform the Principal or Deputy Principal(s) immediately
- In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after they determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded by the relevant teacher in the standardised recording [AB3 - Referral to Board of Management](#) and referred to the Anti-Bullying team for further consideration and follow-up.
- This may involve trying a different intervention, application of the school's Code of Conduct (up to and including suspension and exclusion), or referral of the case to the HSE or An Gardaí Síochána
- In any cases where the school has serious concerns in relation to managing the behaviour of a student, the advice of the National Education Psychological Service (NEPS) may be sought.
- Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with the DES procedures, they must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedure
- In the event that a parent has exhausted the complaints procedure and is still not satisfied, the parents have a right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children

Referral of Serious Cases to the HSE

Virginia College reserves the right, in accordance with Section 6.3.5 of the DES procedures to seek the assistance of agencies such as the National Education Psychological Service (NEPS), the HSE, and the Gardaí, where it deems such assistance is necessary to dealing effectively with bullying. In any case where the school deems bullying behaviour to be potentially abusive (see sections 6.8.12, 6.8.13 and 6.8.14 of the DES procedures) it will consult with the Tusla's *Child and Family Agency* to assist it in drawing up an appropriate response or to obtain advice or to make a formal child protection report to the HSE or the Gardaí (as appropriate) in accordance with the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Programme of Supports for working with students affected by bullying

The school's programme of supports for working with pupils affected by bullying behaviour is as follows:

- ✓ The school has an established *Student Support Team (SST)* who meet on a weekly basis and students are referred for supports where appropriate and available
- ✓ Students who have been bullied will be offered appropriate counselling. They will also be encouraged to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their social skills and to build their resilience e.g. extracurricular activities
- ✓ Students who have been involved in bullying behaviour will be provided with counselling to help them to learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others. They will also be encouraged to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their social skills and to build their feelings of self-worth e.g. extracurricular activities
- ✓ Students who observe incidents of bullying behaviour will be encouraged to discuss them with their teachers and their parents and to avail of support where they feel it may assist them to cope effectively with what they have experienced.

Education and prevention strategies

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

- Virginia College makes it clear to all members of the college community that bullying of any kind is unacceptable, irrespective of whether it is a student, a staff member or any other person that is the subject of such behaviour. In this context, all members of the Virginia College community have a duty to bring to the attention of the Principal, Deputy Principals and/or relevant teacher any incident of bullying including cyberbullying or harassment that they know about or suspect.
- While, when investigating and dealing with bullying the primary focus is on resolving differences and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than apportioning blame), Virginia College nevertheless reserves the right to take disciplinary action (up to and including suspension and expulsion), where such is warranted, in accordance with the College's Code of Behaviour and the CMETB Suspensions and Expulsions Policy, against those who bully others.
- The prevention and awareness of bullying is integral to this policy and students will, through both their curricular and extra-curricular programmes, be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth.

- The focus of Virginia College's prevention strategy will be to build empathy, respect and resilience in students.
- Students will be provided with opportunities to understand the causes and effects of bullying, the issue of identity-based bullying and, in particular, homophobic and trans-phobic bullying. This will include the display of LGBT posters (as appropriate) and discussions with parents about statements of welcome and respect for LGBT members of the college community, teaching the Social, Personal, Health Education (SPHE) resource, Growing Up LGBT and (as appropriate) participating in LGBT awareness events.
- Virginia College recognises that the SPHE curriculum makes specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the inter-related areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships. Also, that the Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) programme provides opportunities to explore and discuss areas such as human sexuality and relationships, which has particular relevance to identity-based bullying. The College's SPHE programme will specifically address the issue of bullying with annually.
- Virginia College is engaged with the Yellow Flag programmes to ensure our school community is inclusive of all cultures and ethnicities.
- Furthermore, it is recognised that there is potential within the teaching of all subjects and within extracurricular activities to foster an attitude of respect for all: to promote the value of diversity; to address prejudice and stereotyping and to highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour. We promote co-operation and group enterprise through team sports, college clubs and societies as well as through practical subjects. Sporting activities in particular can provide excellent opportunities for channelling and learning how to control aggression.
- Prevention and awareness raising measures will also deal explicitly with cyber- bullying through educating students about appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while on-line and also through developing a culture of reporting any concerns about or incidents of bullying to a member of the teaching staff in line with Virginia College social media Policy.

Communication with Student and Parents

- Virginia College will, in all its communications with students and their parents, commencing with the induction of the student into the College, make every effort to highlight the importance of students reporting incidents of or concerns about bullying to a member of the teaching staff on

the clear understanding that these matters are being reported in confidence. This means that a student who draws concerns about bullying to the attention of a relevant teacher will not have his/her identity divulged in any way that might result in those against whom allegations are being made identifying the source of the report.

- More than anything else, the combating of bullying will depend on the extent to which students note and report bullying. In this context, the well-being of students is very much dependent on the vigilance of their fellow students and their preparedness to report concerns about bullying to the teaching staff and/or college management. All teaching staff will reinforce this point to students on an ongoing basis.
- Virginia College will adopt a college-wide approach (involving management, staff, parents and students) to prevent and combat bullying. In this context, the College is committed to engaging with parents. Firstly, Virginia College will involve them in the development of policies and practices to combat bullying. Secondly, Virginia College will hold information evenings for parents to ensure that they understand the way the College deals with bullying, and to provide them with reliable information on how they may contribute towards combating bullying.
- In accordance with 6.8.9 of the DES Procedures 'parents and students are expected to co-operate with any investigation and assist the college in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as 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 students or staff or the harassment of students 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.
- **Please note that Bullying and Harassment will not be tolerated in Virginia College. Under the Anti-Bullying Policy, breaches may be referred to be dealt with under the Code of Conduct. This will include the full range of sanctions of the Code of Conduct, up to and including Suspension and Exclusion. In situations where an incident (bullying or misconduct) is serious and where the**

behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive, the matter will be referred to the Designated Liaison Person (DLP).

Students with AEN

- In combating bullying, Virginia College will take particular account of the needs of students with disabilities or with AEN. This will involve improving inclusion, focusing on developing social skills, paying particular attention to student induction and cultivating a college culture that respects everyone and values helping one another.

Yearly Events

- Virginia College is committed to devoting a continuous professional development session each year to building the capacity of the College to combat bullying.
- Virginia College is committed to surveying the student body regularly to identify the extent of bullying and, in so far as is possible, the students that are affected by it.
- Virginia College will, each year, include Anti-bullying Awareness Talks to highlight the whole issue of bullying and staying safe using modern technology.
- Virginia College's senior students will have a specific responsibility for recognising bullying behaviour and for bringing concerns about bullying behaviour to the attention of a relevant teacher. Senior prefects will deliver a number of lessons to First Year students on the topic of bullying awareness.
- Virginia College involves the student council in contributing to a safe school environment e.g., Buddy System, mentoring and other student activities that can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- Tutors will reinforce the Anti Bullying procedures to students and offer them support where appropriate
- Assembly with Year Heads will reinforce the Anti Bullying message to students on a regular basis

Culture of Telling

- Virginia College encourages a culture of telling. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It is made clear to all pupils what when they report incidences of bullying, they are not considered to be telling tales but behaving responsibly.
- Virginia College ensures that pupils know how to tell, e.g.:

- Direct approach to teacher at any time
- Hand up notes in student journal
- Make a phone call to the school or to a trusted teacher in the school.
- Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on their behalf.
- Completing online report form on the school website.
- Virginia College encourages parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect their child is being bullied in any of the following ways:
 - Make a phone call to the school to inform the Year Head/Deputy Principals/Principal
 - Completing online report form on the school website.

Supervision and Monitoring of Anti-Bullying in Virginia College

The Board of Management confirms that it will endeavour to ensure 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.

The implementation and effectiveness of the school's anti-bullying policy will be an agenda item for all staff meetings – so the concerns about the policy and/or the welfare of individual students can be shared and effectively addressed.

Data gathered through the reporting templates will be collated and analysed annually with a view to monitoring levels of bullying behaviour and identifying issues requiring attention.

At least once in every school term, The Principal will provide a report to the Board of Management setting out the following.

- the overall number of bullying cases reported by means of the bullying recording template since the previous report to the Board.
- confirmation that all cases referred via the recording template have been or are being, dealt with in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy and the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools. The minutes of Board of Management' meetings will record the principal's report but in doing so will not include any identifying details of the students involved.

Policy Adoption and Review

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management of Virginia College on the 12th of September 2023.

Policy Dissemination and Publication

This policy will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parent School Association.

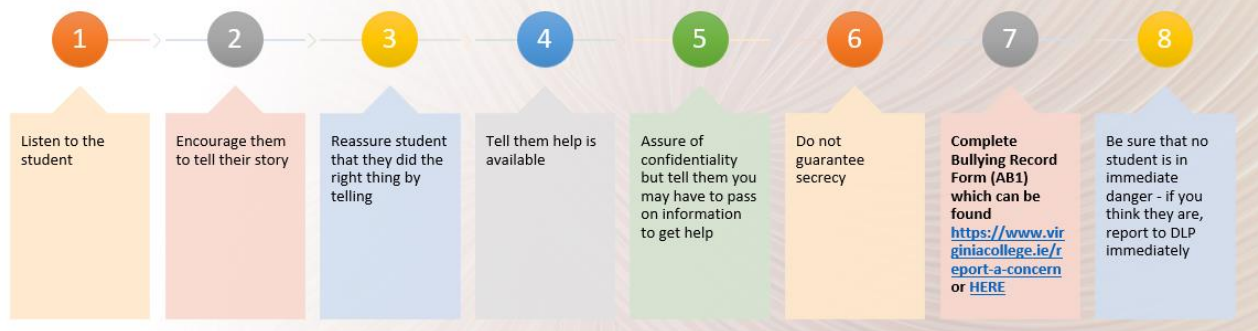
Policy Review

- The Board of Management will undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation in accordance with the procedures set out in Section 7.2 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools using the checklist included at Appendix 2 of those procedures,
- The Board of Management will ensure that an action plan is put in place to address any areas for improvement identified by the annual review.
- Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parent School Association.
- Details of the review will be recorded in the minutes of the Board of Management' meeting that adopted the review and a record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, will be made available to the Patron (Cavan and Monaghan ETB) and the DES. In the case of the DES, it is appreciated that the Inspectorate will place a strong focus on the actions Virginia College takes to create a positive school culture and to prevent and tackle bullying.

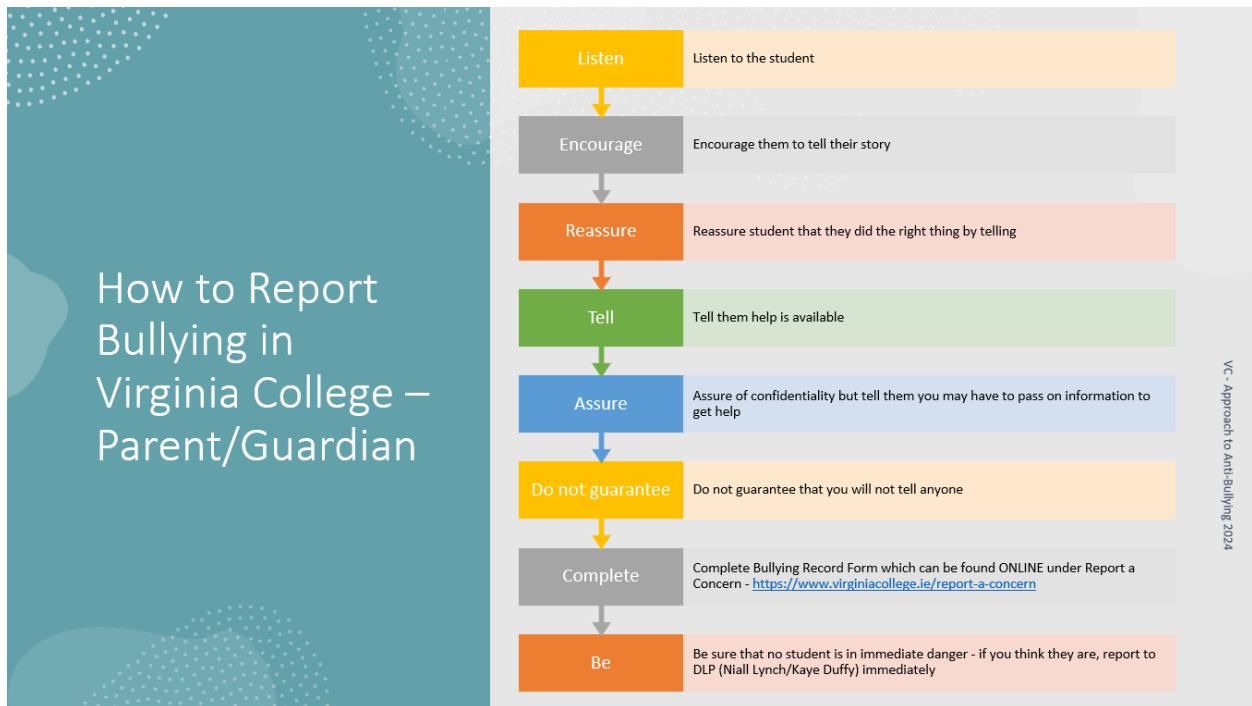
Appendix

Appendix 1 – Graphic – How to Report Bullying – Teacher Procedure

How to Report Bullying in Virginia College – Teacher Report Procedure



Appendix 2 – Graphic – How to Report Bullying – Parent Procedure



Appendix 3 – Graphic – How to Report Bullying – Overview

How to Report Bullying in Virginia College – Overview



VC - Approach to Anti-Bullying 2024

Appendix 4 – Graphic – How to Report Bullying – Student

How to Report Bullying in Virginia College – Student



Speak to an adult – Teacher or Parent



They will encourage you to tell your story



Be reassured that you did the right thing by telling



Help is available



An adult cannot assure you of confidentiality and will have to pass on information to get help



You may be asked to fill out a form which asks the immediate questions – what happened, when did it happen and who was involved

Appendix 5 AB1 – Referral Form

AB1 - Anti Bullying Form 1
Form to be used for investigating any allegations of bullying behaviour

Name of student (allegedly) being bullied:			
Name:		Class:	

Name(s) of student(s) (allegedly) engaged in bullying behaviour			
Name:		Class:	
Name:		Class:	
Name:		Class:	

Name(s) of person(s) who reported the bullying concern: <i>(if a student then please include class)</i>	
Name:	

Details of Bullying Behaviour (alleged):		
Type:	Tick:	Brief description: <i>(Please attach any additional information/statements)</i>
Physical Aggression	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Intimidation	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Isolation/Exclusion	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Relational Bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Cyber-bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Name-Calling		
Damage to property		
Extortion		
Identity-Based (<i>specify</i>)		

Impact of Bullying Behaviour (alleged):

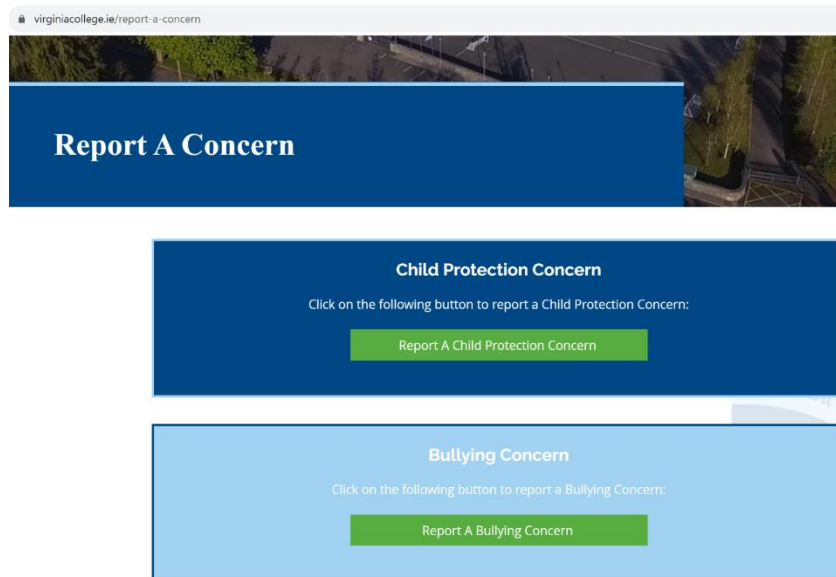
Brief Description of Investigation:

Signed: _____ (Relevant Teacher)

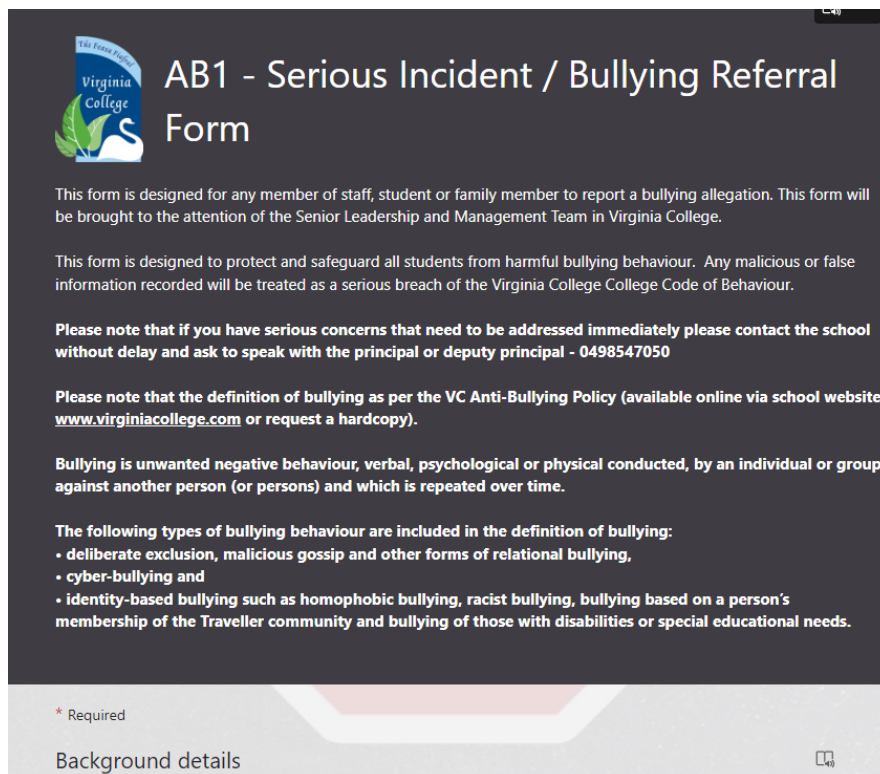
Date: _____

OR

By filling in the online form



<https://www.viriniacollege.ie/report-a-concern>



Appendix 6 - Incident Report form to be completed by student.

Virginia College – Student Record Form – To be completed by student	
Your Name:	
Class group:	
Date:	
Please answer the following questions in as much detail as possible :	
<i>What happened?</i>	
<i>Where did it happen?</i>	
<i>When did it happen?</i>	
<i>Who was involved?</i>	
<i>Why do you think this happened?</i>	

Signed: _____ Date: _____ Time: _____

OR

By filling in online form <https://forms.office.com/e/F9P1qJmwJT>



Appendix 7 – AB2 Form

AB2 - Anti Bullying Form 2
Form to be used for dealing with and following up on bullying behaviour
Please attach to the record of initial investigation (AB1 FORM)

Date:			
Name of student being bullied:			
Name:		Class:	

Name(s) of student(s) engaged in bullying behaviour			
Name:		Class:	
Name:		Class:	
Name:		Class:	

Name(s) of person(s) who reported the bullying concern: <i>(if a student then please include class)</i>			
Name:			
Communication with Parent/Guardian of student being bullied:			
Date:			
Signed:			

Communication with Parent/Guardian of student(s) engaged in bullying behaviour:	
Date:	

Signed:	
---------	--

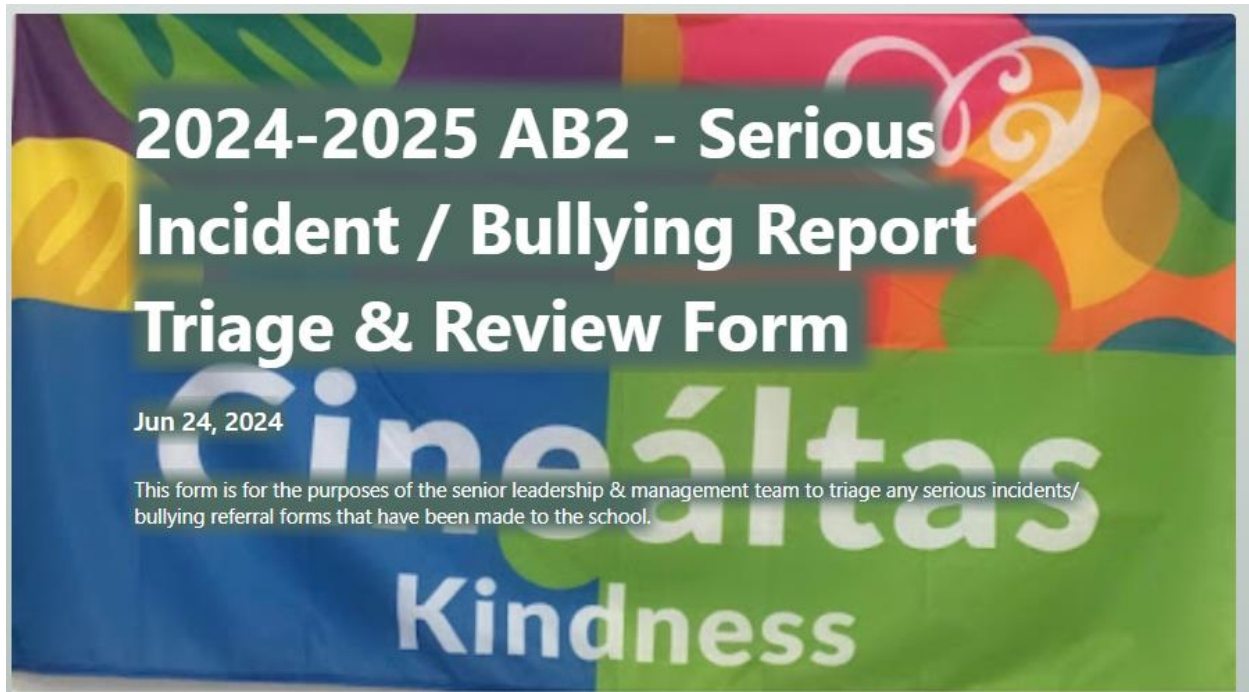
Student(s) engaged in bullying behaviour have been instructed that such behaviour must cease immediately and that the case will be monitored for the next 20 school days.	Date:
Student(s) engaged in bullying behaviour has/have been informed that if the behaviour does not cease in the next 20 days, then the case will be referred to the Board of Management of the school and the Code of Conduct will be implemented (up to and including suspension and exclusion from school)	Date:
Parent of student(s) engaged in bullying behaviour have been instructed that such behaviour must cease immediately and that the case will be monitored for the next 20 school days.	Date:
The parent of the student(s) engaged in bullying behaviour has/have been informed that if the behaviour does not cease in the next 20 days, then the case will be referred to the Board of Management of the school and the Code of Conduct will be implemented (up to and including suspension and exclusion from school)	Date:

<u>Details of Actions taken</u>		
Clear instruction to student to cease bullying behaviours		Date:
Evidence-based strategy (where appropriate):	Tick:	Brief description: <i>(Please attach any additional information)</i>
Implementation of Code of Conduct		
Strengthening the Victim		
Mediation		
Restorative Practice		
Support-Group Method		
Method of Shared Concern		

ABP 2024-2025

OR

<https://forms.office.com/e/52WckWsaIF>



Appendix 8 – Case File Checklist

Case Unique Identifier				
Anti-Bullying Case File Checklist	YES	NO	N/A	Additional Notes
1. Copy of Bullying Referral Form				
2. Copy of Triage Form				
3. Review Form (If required)				
4. Notes of Investigation				
5. Statements				
a. Statement from Victim				
b. Statement from Accused				
c. Eyewitness Statements				
6. Notes of meetings				
a. Parents/Guardians				
b. Students				

Appendix 9 – AB3 Form- Following up on Bullying Behaviour

<p><u>AB3 Form</u></p> <p><i>Form to be used by the Anti-Bullying Team to record AB3 level cases</i></p> <p><i>Please attach the AB1 and AB2 forms to this form when reporting Please attach the AB1 and AB2 forms to this form when reporting.</i></p>
--

Date:			
Name of student being bullied:			
Name:		Class:	

Name(s) of student(s) engaged in bullying behaviour			
Name:		Class:	
Name:		Class:	
Name:		Class:	

Name(s) of person(s) who reported the bullying concern: <i>(If a student then please include class)</i>	
Name:	

Reason for referral to AB3 LEVEL (please tick):	
Bullying behaviour has not ceased within 20 school days since completion of investigation	
Serious case of bullying requiring immediate referral e.g., physical assault/sexual assault	

Details of Bullying Behaviour that occurred within the 20 school day period:		
Type:	Tick:	Brief description: <i>(Please attach any additional information/statements)</i>
Physical Aggression	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Intimidation	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Isolation/Exclusion		
Relational Bullying		
Cyber-bullying		
Name-Calling		
Damage to property		
Extortion		
Identity-based (<i>Specify</i>)		

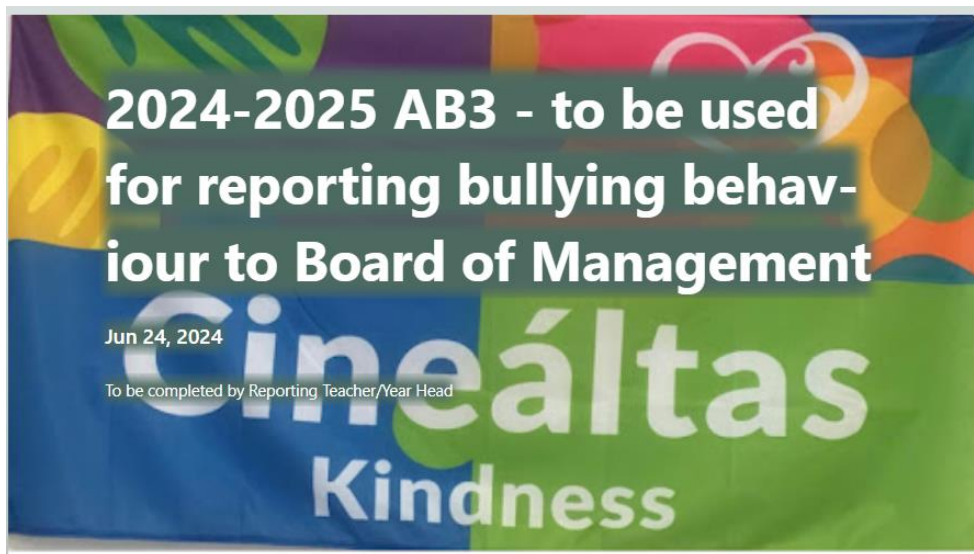
Student(s) engaged in bullying behaviour has/have been informed that the case will be referred to the Board of Management of the school and the Code of Conduct will be implemented (up to and including suspension and exclusion from school)	Date:
The parent of the student(s) engaged in bullying behaviour has/have been informed that the case will be referred to the Board of Management of the school and the Code of Conduct will be implemented (up to and including suspension and exclusion from school)	Date:

DATE REPORTED TO BOARD OF MANAGEMENT: _____

Signed: _____ *(Relevant Teacher)*

Date: _____

OR <https://forms.office.com/e/rNTdyqs1LF>



Appendix 10- Checklist for Annual Review of the Anti-bullying Policy and its implementation

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual review of the school’s anti-bullying policy and its implementation. The following checklist must be used for this purpose. The checklist is an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. In order to complete the checklist, an examination and review involving both quantitative and qualitative analysis, as appropriate across the various elements of the implementation of the school’s anti-bullying policy will be required.

Yes /No

Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools?	
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents’ association?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	
Is the Board satisfied that school staff are sufficiently familiar with the policy and procedures to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy and procedures in their day-to-day work?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all students?	
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school 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 school is handling all reports of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and not therefore included in the principal’s periodic report to the Board?	
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school’s handling of bullying incidents?	
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school’s handling of a bullying situation?	

Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school'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 school'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: _____

Principal

