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**Presentation Secondary School**

**Church Street, Castleisland, Co. Kerry**

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## **Anti-Bullying Policy**

**2024 – 2025**

This Policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2024



*Our vision is to prepare accomplished, confident, resilient and independent young adults, who follow their passions, develop a love of learning and become positive role models in society.*

- 1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of Presentation Secondary School, Castleisland has adopted the following Anti-Bullying Policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* which were published in September 2013.**
  
- 2. The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:**
  - A positive school culture and climate which:
    - o is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
    - o encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment;  
and
    - o promotes respectful relationships across the school community;
  - Effective leadership;
  - A school-wide approach;
  - A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
  - Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that:
    - o build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
    - o explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic, transphobic and biphobic bullying.
  - Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
  - 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 anti-bullying policy.

**3. In accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2013* 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, transphobic and biphobic 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.

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*.

**4. 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*):**

A student/parent/guardian/staff member/unnamed source may bring a bullying concern to any teacher in the school. This teacher will record the complaint on an alleged Bullying Behaviour Form (Appendix 3) and will inform the Year Head via further completion of the form. The Year Head then becomes the relevant teacher for investigating and dealing with the alleged bullying.

The Year Heads for the 2024 – 2025 academic year are set out below:

- 1<sup>st</sup> Year: **Ms. Katie O'Reilly**
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Year: **Ms. Mairead Lane**
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Year: **Mr. Edward Clarke**
- 4<sup>th</sup> Year: **Ms. Tracey Dooley**
- 5<sup>th</sup> Year: **Ms. Liz Cosgrave**
- 6<sup>th</sup> Year: **Ms. Annette Leen**

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

#### **Programmes**

- DCU FUSE: 2022 – 2025
- One Good School (Jigsaw Kerry): 2019 – 2024
- Quality Mark – Belong To: 2023 - 2025

#### **Themed Weeks**

- Stand Up Awareness Week
- Anti-Bullying Week

#### **Cyber – Bully Strategies**

- Webwise
- Safer Internet Day
- AUP & Code of Behaviour explained to students via assemblies and journal. These are signed by Parents/Guardians.
- Assemblies
- Parent Information Evenings offered online.
- Digital/IT classes
- Interventions: programmes above
- Subject specific modules: SPHE, RSE
- Anti-bullying literacy

#### **Identity-Based Strategies**

- SPHE classes
- Retreats
- Workshops
- Year group trips
- Assemblies
- Trocaire Lent campaign
- Stand Up Awareness Week

#### **Creating a positive school culture and climate that is open and supportive**

- Respectful behaviour will be modelled to all members of the school community at all times.
- Students will be constantly reminded that certain standards apply in the school, and they must comply with these standards.
- “Please” and “Thank You” should be part of the natural vocabulary. Politeness, common courtesy and good manners will be constantly encouraged by all members of staff.
- Year Heads will read and explain the school Code of Behaviour at assemblies.
- Year Heads will draw the attention of students to the Vision and Mission Statement of the School.
- Students will be given time in class to think about behavioural standards they would like for themselves and how to communicate these to others in SPHE classes.
- Promoting a culture of respect will be a whole school approach.
- Student awareness of respect, consideration and support for their teachers and their peers will be highlighted at assemblies held by the respective Year heads.
- Students will be allowed to achieve in all areas without a begrudging attitude. Such achievements

will be acknowledged via the app, intercom and annual awards night.

- Differences and diversity will be embraced.
- Students will abide by all the school rules and have a positive attitude in all that they do.
- Students will have high expectations of themselves.
- Staff will have high expectations of all students.
- The use of discriminatory and derogatory language will be consistently tackled.
- The school's approach to tackling and preventing bullying takes account of the needs of pupils with disabilities or with SEN. Approaches to decreasing the likelihood of bullying for pupils with SEN include improving inclusion, focusing on developing social skills particularly through SPHE class, paying attention to key moments such as transitioning from primary to post-primary through the provision of an induction programme and mentoring.

### **Effective Leadership**

#### **The Staff:**

- Will continually remind the students of their rights and responsibilities and their entitlement to an education in a safe environment.
- Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.
- Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.
- Actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- Encourage and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- Students will be constantly encouraged by staff to contribute to a school atmosphere and ethos in which the students feel free to speak up if bullying takes place.
- Year group assemblies will promote an awareness of our anti-bullying policy and the importance of valuing the dignity of each member of our school community.
- Will evaluate the effectiveness of the school's anti-bullying policy on an annual basis.

#### **A school-wide approach**

The emphasis will always be on prevention. We work proactively to ensure as far as we can that bullying does not take place. We aim to prevent bullying by raising awareness about the reality of bullying and its detrimental effects. We use the following approaches to prevent bullying and where it does take place, to deal with it and appropriately:

- All teachers will use every available opportunity to raise awareness of the unacceptability of bullying behaviour and will address this behaviour if and when it arises.
- At Junior Level, the SPHE teachers will use aspects of the SPHE programme to raise awareness of the inappropriateness of bullying behaviour. This will be done in a structured way, with the teachers deciding on a series of classes for each group.
- At Senior level, R.E. teachers will address the topic of bullying and mutual respect.
- The lessons will aim to address issues such as empathy, assertiveness, coping skills, rights and responsibilities.
- Non-teaching staff (SNA's, caretaker, cleaners, secretaries) are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.
- Our school has a firm but fair discipline structure. The rules are simple and easy to understand.
- The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Pupils will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.
- Whole staff awareness of what bullying is through familiarity with our school policy, how bullying impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it—prevention and intervention.
- Visiting speakers will address the problems of bullying.
- Peer mentoring for new First Year students and students new to the school — teamed with 4<sup>th</sup> Year

mentors.

- The Anti-Bullying Policy will be available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents Forum. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.
- Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible.
- In addition, the school may at its discretion organise for pupils: A Stand Up Awareness Week, Sport's Day, Anti-Bullying Week etc.

### **A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact**

- Students are encouraged through the Anti-Bullying lessons not to be a "by-stander" and to do their utmost to protect a victim of bullying behaviour by reporting any such observation to a relevant teacher. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales, but are behaving responsibly. We ensure that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.:
  - Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time for example after class.
  - Speak to their Year Head or any member of the Student Support Team (SST)
  - Hand note up with homework.
  - Make a phone call to the school.
  - Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
  - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
  - The full implementation of the SPHE and CSPE curriculum and the RSE Programmes.
  - School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence-based programmes: Cyber Bullying, Homophobic, Biphobic and Transphobic Bullying (Quality Mark, Stand Up Programme, The Trustpack) Diversity and Inter-culturalism.
  - Guest speakers may be invited to address the issue of bullying with staff and students.
  - The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.
  - Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils.
  - Comprehensive supervision of key areas of the school, during supervision period.
  - Teachers on supervision duty supervise –
    - Corridor areas
    - Classrooms
    - Canteen
    - Toilets
  - The supervisors walk around the corridors and enter the classrooms during supervision periods.
  - The supervisors are alert to students who are constantly alone.
  - The supervisors disperse students clustering in and around toilet areas.
  - Supervision will also apply the mobile phone policy within the school. The school has an Acceptable Use Policy which addresses the use of technology.

### **Supports for staff**

- Opportunities for CPD will be brought to the attention of staff and where possible those interested in participation will be facilitated.
- Year Heads and staff on the student support team will be encouraged to participate in all relevant in-service.
- Staff including ancillary staff will be reminded each term of the importance of consistent recording and investigation of bullying allegations.

- Annual review of the Anti-bullying policy.
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies).
- Documentation, record keeping and confidentiality.

If a student/parent/unnamed source brings a bullying concern to a member of staff, he/she will record the complaint on an Alleged Bullying Behaviour Form (Appendix 3) and will refer the matter using the form to the Year Head who will endeavour to ascertain some of the facts behind the allegation and will mediate and resolve if appropriate.

The Year Head is the relevant teacher for investigating and dealing with alleged bullying. Their primary aim is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

If the Year Head is satisfied that with his/her initial enquiries regarding the situation indicate that bullying behaviour has occurred or is ongoing, the Year Head will complete Appendix 3 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools and submit it to the Principal.

All details will be documented by the relevant teacher — from the initial disclosure to its conclusion. Students must be told that total confidentiality cannot be given. Teachers will be informed of confirmed bullying incidents in their class.

#### **Circulation of the Policy**

The Anti-Bullying Policy will be available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents Forum. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

Teachers will follow the procedure when alleged bullying is reported.

Year Heads will have anti-bullying on every assembly agenda.

The Board of Management will undertake an annual review of the school's Anti-bullying policy and its implementation by the school and written notification that this process has taken place will be made available to school personnel, published in the school website and provided to the Parents Forum.

#### **On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.**

The effectiveness of the policy will be evaluated as follows:

- It will be reviewed by the Board of Management annually. The Board's review will be informed by the Principal's reports on recorded allegations and confirmed incidents of bullying as well as any up to date guidance from the Department of Education and Skills.
- That the victim of a bullying incident can see clearly that the school anti-bullying policy was implemented, and the perpetrator was dealt with appropriately.
- That where incidents occur, that the policy is followed and implemented quickly.
- That an atmosphere and ethos is established throughout the school in which bullying is unacceptable and in which all feel free to speak up if bullying takes place.
- A reduction in the number of alleged and confirmed incidents of bullying.

**6. 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 as follows (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*) :**

The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and restore as far as is practicable the relationships of the parties involved.

(Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2013, pg:6)

**Step I**

- A student/parent/guardian/staff member/unnamed source may bring a bullying concern to any teacher in the school. This teacher will record the complaint on an Alleged Bullying Behaviour Form (Appendix 3) and will refer the matter using this form to the Year Head. In Presentation Secondary School, Castleisland the Year Head is the relevant teacher.

**Step II**

- The student/s involved in the alleged bullying will be interviewed individually by the Year Head. (If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first).
- The allegations will be listened to and addressed seriously and sensitively.
- While confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, all allegations will be dealt with discreetly.
- Details of the reported allegation of bullying will be written down and read back to the student/students for confirmation.
- If they so wish, the student may write down their account of the incident.

**Step III**

- All students involved, the alleged victim and the alleged bully, will be interviewed together by the Year Head and Principal and/or Deputy Principal.
- Students will be requested not to discuss the nature or content of the meeting with other students.
- Each recorded account will be read out to ensure that everyone is clear about what everyone else has said.
- At this stage whilst it may become clear that one or more students have engaged in bullying behaviour, every effort will be made to come to an amicable conclusion.
- It will be made clear to the pupil that has engaged in bullying behaviour that she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts will be made to try to get her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
- All students involved will be informed that additional support is available in the school from a member of the student support team if they require it.
- Where it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken in line with the school's policy. However, it will also be made clear to all involved that where disciplinary sanctions are required, it is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, her parents and the school.
- The Year Head will complete Appendix 3 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools and submit it to the Principal.
- The Year Head will meet with both parties separately within two weeks of the problem being resolved, to monitor progress, with a view of bringing them together if possible.

**Step IV –**

If the same student or students are alleged to be involved in a further incident of bullying.

- The student/s involved in the alleged bullying will be interviewed individually by the Year



Head.

- The allegations will be listened to and addressed seriously and sensitively.
- While confidentiality cannot be guaranteed, all allegations will be dealt with discreetly.
- Details of the reported allegation of bullying will be written down and read back to the student/students for confirmation.
- If they so wish, the student may write down their account of the situation.
- All students involved, the alleged victim and the alleged bully, will be interviewed together by the Year Head and Principal and/or Deputy Principal.
- Students will be requested not to discuss the nature or content of the meeting with other students.
- Each recorded account will be read out to ensure that everyone is clear about what everyone else has said.
- At this stage whilst it may become clear that one or more students have engaged in bullying behaviour every effort will be made to come to an amicable conclusion.
- All students involved will be informed that additional support is available in the school from a member of the student support team should they require it.
- If it is concluded that a student has been engaged in bullying behaviour, she will be informed:
  - a) that she is in breach of the school Code of Behaviour and that she must stop her unacceptable behaviour immediately;
  - b) that her parents/guardians will be informed to support her in changing her unacceptable behaviour.
  - c) that teachers will be informed of the unacceptable behaviour.
  - d) that support is available in the school from a member of the student support team to enable her to change her unacceptable behaviour
  - e) that if her bullying behaviour continues, the Code of Behaviour will apply. In certain circumstances, the support of NEPS may be requested.

#### **The victim of bullying will be informed**

- a) that her parents/guardians will be contacted so that they are in a position to help and support her.
- b) that she has behaved in a most responsible way in bringing the incident to the attention of the school management.
- c) that if she wishes to see a member of the student support team, an appointment will be made for her.
- d) that continuing support will be available as long as it is necessary.
- e) that teachers will be informed.

#### **External support will be offered if required**

- The Year Head will meet with both parties within two weeks of the problem being resolved, to monitor progress.  
Please note:
- Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents will be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
- In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.
- The school will consult the HSE Children and Family Social Services and/or Gardai in respect of serious cases.

**7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows (see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):**

- After a bullying incident has been investigated, the Year Head will stay in touch with the students involved.
- If necessary, the students may be required to engage in counselling session(s) with the school counsellor.
- The Leader of Wellbeing will be informed of the situation and will keep an eye on the students within the context of SPHE, RE programmes.
- Subject teachers will be informed on a need-to-know basis.
- A programme of support for pupils who have been bullied and have engaged in bullying behaviour are put in place. This may involve encouraging students to get involved in extra-curricular activities to develop their friendship and social skills thus building resilience or perhaps mindfulness classes to reflect on their behaviour in the case of those engaging in bullying behaviour.

**Helping the Victim(s)**

- With the consent of the victim and her parents, the student will be referred to the student support team.
- If deemed appropriate, support from an outside agency may be recommended.
- Teachers will be told of the incident, to enable vigilance within the school.

“Victims [of bullying] may need counselling and opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem.”

(Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour in Primary and Post-Primary Schools September 1993)

**Helping the Perpetrator(s)**

- The perpetrator will be given the opportunity to explain why she is behaving in such a manner.
- The perpetrator will be made aware of the distress being suffered by the victim as a result of her behaviour.
- Teachers will be informed of the incident to enable vigilance.
- With the consent of her parents, she will be referred to the student support team, for support “A programme of support for those pupils involved in bullying behaviour should be an integral part of the school's intervention process”

(Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour in Primary and Post-Primary Schools September 1993.)

## 8. Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

## 9. Prevention of Harassment

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

10. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2024..

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents Forum. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

12. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, be otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents Forum. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: Mary O'Keefe  
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: 16/12/24

Signed: Piera Derson  
(Principal/Secretary to the BOM)

Date: 16/12/24

Date of next review: September 2025

## Appendix 2 - Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate

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

- Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.
- Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.
- Catch them being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN.
- Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.
- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.
- Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use. Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.
- Actively involve parents and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media.
- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.
- Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.
- All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- Ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.
- School staff can get pupils to help them to identify bullying “hot spots” and “hot times” for bullying in the school.
  - Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas, changing rooms, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision.
  - Hot times again tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when pupils are in the playground/school yard or moving classrooms.
- Support the establishment and work of student councils.

## Appendix 3 - Template for recording bullying behaviour

**1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

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


**3. Source of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es))\***

Pupil concerned	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Pupil	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

**4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))\***

Playground	<input type="checkbox"/>
Classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corridor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Toilets	<input type="checkbox"/>
School Bus	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

**5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern**

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**6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) \***

Physical Aggression	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cyber-bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>
Damage to Property	<input type="checkbox"/>	Intimidation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Isolation/Exclusion	<input type="checkbox"/>	Malicious Gossip	<input type="checkbox"/>
Name Calling	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

**7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:**

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact**

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**9. Details of actions taken**

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Signed \_\_\_\_\_ (Relevant Teacher) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal \_\_\_\_\_

**\* Note:** The categories listed in the tables 3, 4 & 6 are suggested and schools may add to or amend these to suit their own circumstances.