



Anti-bullying Policy

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 Ashbourne Educate Together National School 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-
 - is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
 - encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment;
 - 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-
 - build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
 - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
 - Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
 - 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 bullying is defined as follows

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

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

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
- cyber-bullying and
- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special 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.

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows:
The Class teacher will initially investigate incidents of bullying. The class teacher is requested to inform the Senior Management Team (Principal and Deputy Principal)

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber- bullying and identity based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:

- The Stay Safe Programme will be taught from Junior Infants to Sixth Class. Time will be devoted to discussion on bullying at each class level- in an age appropriate way. Teachers will place great emphasis on re-affirming the children's sense of self-esteem.
- Our Learn Together Programme celebrates diversity and promotes inclusivity, Children will learn about human rights from Junior Infants to Sixth Class. These lessons are used to promote self-esteem/confidence, to teach the children between right and wrong and to celebrate difference.

- Children will be informed of our anti bullying policy. Children will be encouraged and helped to say No to bullying behaviour and to report experiences of bullying. Children will be taught there is a big difference between telling tales and asking for help.
- Every year we will hold a Friendship Week/Anti- Bullying Week. All classes from Junior Infants to Sixth Class will learn about bullying and what they should do if they are being bullied or if they know that someone else is being bullied. During Anti Bullying Week the topics of Cyber Bullying and homophobic bullying will be taught formally in 5th & 6th Classes
- Human Rights Month will take place in the school annually. Each year Children from 3rd to 6th Class will explore the Equal Status Act and the nine grounds on which discrimination is prohibited in Ireland.
- Children from 3rd to 6th Class will take part in the schools Anti Bullying Campaign and will use and adapt some of the lessons suggested by Sean Fallon's Anti Bullying Campaign. We will adapt these lessons based on the needs of our school at that time
- SPHE lessons in 5th & 6th Class will teach the children about staying safe on the internet, the children will be taught about how to behave correctly on line in a manner that keeps both themselves and other people safe.

- **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:**

Investigation

- The primary aim for the relevant teacher 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)
- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
- All reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant class teacher. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but that they are behaving responsibly.
- 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.
- On being informed of an alleged incident of bullying, the teacher dealing with it will first interview the alleged victim/s and discuss the feelings which the alleged victim/s experienced because of the bullying behaviour. An interview will then take place with the alleged perpetrator/s. Members of a gang should be met individually and as a group.

- All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way
- Teachers will take a calm, unemotional problem solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour.
- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher 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.
- Sanctions will be imposed at the discretion of the school.

Sanctions

- Loss of yard time
- Letters of apology
- Additional work
- Loss of golden time
- Exclusion from peers – In class Suspension
- Referral to senior staff
- Withdrawal from representing school (playing sport, quiz teams etc)
- Withdrawal from class outings
- Parental supervision at yard time
- Parental supervision on the way to and from school
- Exclusion from school (in compliance with the school Positive Behaviour Policy and the NEWB Guidelines for Schools)

Follow up

- Subsequent meetings will take place to ensure that there is no repeat of bullying behaviour and in order to monitor the situation as deemed necessary.

Recording Bullying Behaviour

- The relevant teacher must record the bullying behaviour in the Standardised Recording Document at Appendix 1 and a copy must be provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable) in the following circumstances:
- In cases where he/she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he /she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred ;
- Where the school has decided as part of its anti-bullying policy that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable
- Completed Standardised Recording Documents will be kept locked away in the Principals Office.
- 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
 - Feedback received from parties involved, their parents or school Principal/Deputy Principal

WHAT HAPPENS IF THE SCHOOL DETERMINES THAT THIS IS NOT BULLYING?

- If following a thorough investigation the teacher determines that bullying has not occurred he/she will refer the issue to the Principal and the Senior Management Team for a second opinion.
- The Senior Management Team will make a decision as to whether bullying has taken place or not. This decision will be recorded and communicated to the parents concerned.
- Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents must 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 will advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Reporting to the Board of Management

- At least once in every school term the Principal will provide a report to the Board of Management setting out:
 - The overall number of bullying cases reported to the Principal or Deputy Principal since the previous report to the Board and
 - Confirmation that all of these cases have been, or are being, dealt with in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy and these procedures
- As part of the oversight arrangements, the Board of Management must undertake an annual review of the school's anti bullying policy and its implementation by the school. See point 12 below

6. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows.

- The child will be praised for speaking out about the bullying situation.
- Close communication between the child's home and school will form a vital part in the child's recovery from being bullied. Class teachers are asked to keep in regular contact with the child's family to ensure that problems have not persisted.
- Children who have engaged in bullying behaviour also need support and close communication between home and school.
- The Class teacher and the support teacher will work together to ensure that the parties involved have the opportunity to communicate their feelings in school.
- The class teacher and/or the support teacher will work on rebuilding the child's (both parties) self-esteem. This may take place in a class, small group or one to one setting.
- A buddy system may be set up for the children if necessary.
- Parents of children who are bullied and parents of children who have bullied will be given a copy of our 'Tips for Parents' sheet.

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 _____

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the Patron if requested.

12. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested to the patron and the Department.

Signed: _____
(Chairperson)

Date: 25th Oct 2018

Signed: _____
(Principal)

Date: 25th Oct 2018

Date of next review: October 2019