



ASHBOURNE **EDUCATE TOGETHER** NATIONAL SCHOOL

Anti-bullying Policy

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.

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) 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;
- b) Effective leadership;
- c) A school-wide approach;
- d) A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
- e) 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.
- f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
- g) Supports for staff;
- h) Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
- i) On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

Definition

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:

Physical aggression; Intimidation; Deliberate exclusion / isolation, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying; Name calling; Damage to property; Cyber-bullying; Extortion; 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.** An issue dealt with and resolved under the code of discipline is considered resolved and parties are encouraged to move past the incident positively.

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 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 May 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 every year. 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. The school 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.

Investigation and Recording

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 relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows:

A pupil, parent or teacher may bring a bullying concern to any teacher in the school. Individual teachers must take appropriate measures regarding reports of bullying behaviour in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy.

Parents bringing an allegation of bullying on behalf of their child may be requested to do so in writing to the class teacher or school principal.

The class teacher will initially investigate incidents of bullying behaviour The class teacher is requested to inform the Senior Management Team (Principal and Deputy Principal) of any investigations taking place. Please Note: Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

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.

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) An issue once dealt with and resolved under the anti-bullying policy , is to be considered resolved and parties are encouraged to move past the incident positively.

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. The relevant teacher will keep a written account of discussions with those involved and actions taken.

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.

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.

Teachers will take a calm, unemotional problem solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour.

Questionnaire's may be used on a group of pupils or a class group to help with any bullying investigation. (Appendix 3). These class surveys may be used during the school year on a whole-class basis as a form of monitoring and information gathering.

Those involved may be asked to give a written account of the incident. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide useful information through written or verbal accounts and interviews.

Where possible incidents will be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.

Teachers should keep a written record of their discussions with those involved.

Recording Bullying Behaviour

It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

All incidents of bullying being investigated should be reported to the Principal.

Each member of staff should keep a written account of all incidents seen by them or reported to them. Every incident should be reported to the Relevant Teacher.

All reports/allegation of bullying will be recorded by the relevant teacher using the school template (Appendix 2) for recording bullying incidents. This report should be supported by other information gathering documents e.g. Incident reports, incident notebooks, emails, other written accounts.

In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the child being bullied should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken.(Appendix 1)

The class teacher will continue to monitor the situation closely for at least 20 days and report findings to principal. Monitoring will continue as deemed necessary.

Completed Standardised Recording Documents and supporting information 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

Where it has been determined that Bullying Has Occurred:

In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred the parents of all the parties involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter. (See Appendix 1)

Parents may be invited to meet with the principal separately.

It must be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his/her parents and the school.

Sanctions will be imposed at the discretion of the school.

Sanctions may include: (not exhaustive)

Loss of yard time/exclusion from the yard

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 passed that. Monitoring will continue for at least 20 days and as deemed necessary passed that.

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 SET teacher, if allocated, will work together to ensure that the parties involved have the opportunity to communicate their feelings in school.

The class teacher and/or SET 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.

Where it has been determined that Bullying has not occurred

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.

If it is determined that the action/incident is not considered bullying the action/incident may be addressed under the Code of Behaviour policy

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

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.

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.

8. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____

9. 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.

10. 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.

Date: 23rd May 2019