

# Church Street National School

## 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 Church Street 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
    - 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)
  - On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy

### **3. Definition of Bullying**

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 will 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. Types of bullying**

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

##### **Physical aggression:**

This behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While pupils often engage in 'mess fights', they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.

##### **Intimidation:**

Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation: it may be based on the use of very aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon. Particularly upsetting can be a facial expression which conveys aggression and/or dislike.

##### **Isolation/exclusion and other relational bullying:**

This occurs where a certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or all of the class group. This practice is usually initiated by the person engaged in bullying behaviour and can be difficult to detect. It may be accompanied by writing insulting remarks about the pupil in public places, by passing around notes about or drawings of the pupil or by whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard. Relational bullying occurs when a person's attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. One of the most common forms includes control: "Do this or I won't be your friend anymore"(implied or stated); a group ganging up against one person (girl or boy); non-verbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumours about a person or giving them the "silent treatment".

##### **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, e-mail, instant messaging (IM), apps, gaming sites, chat-rooms and other online technologies. Being the target of inappropriate or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying. As cyber-bullying uses

technology to perpetrate bullying behaviour and does not require face to face contact, cyber-bullying can occur at any time (day or night). Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyber-bullying. For example, a target may be sent homophobic text messages or pictures may be posted with negative comments about a person's sexuality, appearance etc.

**Name calling:**

Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) which hurts, insults or humiliates should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name-calling of this type refers to physical appearance, e.g., size or clothes worn. Accent or distinctive voice characteristics may attract negative attention. Academic ability can also provoke name calling. This tends to operate at two extremes. There are those who are singled out for attention because they are perceived to be weak academically. At the other extreme there are those who, because they are perceived as high achievers, are also targeted.

**Damage to property:**

Personal property can be the focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, schoolbooks and other learning material or interference with a pupil's locker or bicycle. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.

**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.

## **5. The Relevant Teacher for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying**

- Children will be encouraged to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour. They will be helped to differentiate between incidents of a minor nature and those that constitute bullying. They will also be taught the difference between "telling tales" and asking for help.
- A pupil or parent 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 this policy
- The class teacher has the responsibility for investigating and dealing with bullying and is referred to as "the relevant teacher".

## **6. Strategies for Prevention of Bullying**

- The SPHE curriculum, including the Walk Tall, Stay Safe Programme and Weaving Wellbeing are used throughout the school to support the anti-bullying policy
- Positive self-esteem is fostered among the pupils by celebrating individual differences, by acknowledging good behaviour and by providing opportunities for success

- Pupils are helped to develop empathy by discussing feelings and by trying to put themselves in the place of others
- Teachers respond sensitively to pupils who disclose incidents of bullying
- The school's Anti-Bullying Policy is discussed regularly with the pupils
- Staff are particularly vigilant in monitoring pupils who are considered at risk of bullying / being bullied
  - All disclosed incidents of bullying are investigated.
  - Members of the BOM are familiar with the school's policy on bullying and actively promote it on a repeated basis among staff, parents and pupils.
  - Parents contribute to and support the school's policy on bullying by encouraging positive behaviour both at home and at school, by being vigilant for signs and symptoms that their child is being bullied or is bullying others, by communicating concerns to the school.

## **7. Procedures for Dealing with Instances of Bullying:**

- All incidents of bullying will be recorded in an incident book which will be retained in the school office.
- Pupils will be informed that when they report incidents of bullying, they are acting responsibly.
- A calm, unemotional, problem-solving approach will be used to deal with bullying.
- Incidents of bullying will initially be dealt with by the class teacher. Incidents that are of a serious nature or those that involve pupils from a number of classes will be referred to the Principal.
- On being informed of an alleged incident of bullying, including bullying on the school bus, the teacher dealing with the report will first interview the victim(s) and discuss the feelings which the victim(s) experienced because of the bullying behaviour.
- An interview will then take place with the alleged perpetrator(s). If the bullying involves a group of pupils, members of that group will first be met individually and then as a whole. Having discussed the negative impact which bullying has on both perpetrator(s) and victim(s) responsibility will be placed on all individuals within the group to resolve the difficulty and to take appropriate steps to ensure that it does not happen again.
- If on the conclusion of the preliminary investigation the teacher is convinced that bullying has occurred the Principal will be informed and parent(s)/guardian(s) of all concerned will be contacted.
- Depending on the seriousness of the bullying some or all of Level 2 Supportive Interventions will be utilised.
- Repeated incidents of bullying behaviour will result in the imposition of sanctions. Such sanctions will be proportionate to the seriousness of the bullying Behaviour.
- Refer also to school's Anti Cyber Bullying Policy.

## **8. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:-**

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:

- The Stay Safe Programme
- SPHE
- RSE Programme
- Walk Tall Programme
- Anti-Bullying website (to be set up by the DES in conjunction with this initiative)
- Weaving Wellbeing

The school will also work with the alleged bullies and their victims in revising the programmes above, and with one-to-one support in resolving the issues raised.

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying involves discussing the incidents with the pupils, reassuring them that they were right to bring the events to the attention of staff, that they were not telling tales and their actions will help others, they will be reminded that they should tell again if they have any new concerns. The teacher(s) involved and the principal will check from time to time with the child that everything is ok.

## **9. 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. Particular emphasis is placed on those occasions when situations of bullying are more likely to occur, such as assembly time, play time and dismissal time.

## **10. 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.

11. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2014, reviewed on 19<sup>th</sup> June 2017, 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020 and 30<sup>th</sup> November 2021.

12. This policy has been made available to school personnel and published on the school website. It is accessible to parents and pupils on request. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.
13. 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 and will be readily accessible to parents and pupils on request. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department of Education.

Signed:

Rev Canon Patrick Comerford (Chairperson, Board of Management)

30<sup>th</sup> November 2021

# Rathkeale No. 2 National School

## Bullying Behaviour Record

Name of pupil being bullied and class group

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

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

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Source of bullying concerns/report (tick as appropriate)

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Pupil concerned        |  |
| Other pupil            |  |
| Parent                 |  |
| Teacher                |  |
| Other (please specify) |  |

Location of incidents (tick appropriate boxes)

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Playground             |  |
| Classroom              |  |
| Corridor               |  |
| Stairs                 |  |
| Toilets                |  |
| School Bus             |  |
| Playing Field          |  |
| Other (please specify) |  |

Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern(s)

\_\_\_\_\_

Type of bullying behaviour (tick appropriate boxes)

|                     |  |                |  |
|---------------------|--|----------------|--|
| Physical Aggression |  | Cyber Bullying |  |
|---------------------|--|----------------|--|

|                      |  |                  |  |
|----------------------|--|------------------|--|
| Damage to Property   |  | Intimidation     |  |
| Isolation/ Exclusion |  | Malicious Gossip |  |
| Name Calling         |  | Other (specify)  |  |

Where behaviour is regarded as identify-based bullying, indicate the relevant category

|            |                          |        |                                   |                 |
|------------|--------------------------|--------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Homophobic | Disability / SEN Related | Racist | Membership of Traveller Community | Other (Specify) |
|            |                          |        |                                   |                 |

Brief description of bullying behaviour and its impact

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Details of actions taken

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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(relevant teacher)

Date submitted to principal: \_\_\_\_\_