
Anti-Bullying Policy November 2015

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 Booterstown 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; and
 - 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.

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 teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are, in the first instance, the reporting child's class teacher.¹

¹ See Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, September 2013*

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 include, but are not restricted to, the following:²
- Staff, pupils, parents and Board of Management will be made aware of issues surrounding cyber bullying through the use of appropriate awareness-raising exercises
 - Pupils will learn about forms of bullying through Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), the Relationships and Sexuality Education programme, the Stay Safe programme, assemblies and other curriculum projects.
 - Special focus will be placed on the inclusion of children with Special Educational Needs and improving their social skills, with particular focus on key moments such as the transition to post primary school.
 - The school will engage a speaker to facilitate a workshop on cyber bullying for 5th and 6th classes annually.
 - Classes will be taught the Stay Safe Programme on a biennial basis.
 - Staff CPD (Continuous Professional Development) will assist in learning about current technologies
 - Parents will be provided with information and advice on how to combat cyber bullying
 - Pupils will sign an Acceptable Use of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) Policy.
 - Parents will be expected to sign an Acceptable Use of ICT Policy prior to enrolment and to discuss its meaning with their children.
 - All reports of bullying, including cyber bullying, will be investigated, recorded using Appendix 1 – Form for Recording Bullying Behaviour, stored in the Principal’s office and monitored regularly.
 - This policy will be reviewed annually.

² see Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, September 2013*

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:

- The school shall endeavor to ensure that all activities as far as possible are supervised and monitored with due care and attention.
- All staff members including teachers, classroom assistants, secretaries and managers etc.. shall be vigilant in their roles and be aware of various types of bullying.
- All pupils but in particular senior pupils can be seen as a resource to assist in countering bullying.

6.1 Accurate dated accounts should be kept of ALL incidents using Appendix 1 – Form for Recording Bullying Behaviour. All reports of bullying to be noted. ALL incidents will be investigated by the class teacher in the first incidence. Incidents may be referred to the Deputy Principal or the Principal.

6.2 Parents or guardians of both alleged victims and bullies will be informed by the Principal or Deputy Principal earlier rather than later so that they are given the opportunity of discussing the matter and also in the interest of fair play to all concerned. Parents will be informed of all relevant procedures.

6.3 Where cases remain unresolved at school/teacher/pupil/Principal level the matter should be referred to the Board of Management in writing. If not solved at Board level, the matter will be referred to the local inspectorate.

Teachers will analyse incidents of bullying behaviour by asking the following questions of the child reporting bullying behaviour:

Who? What? When? Where? Why?

This will be done using a calm, unemotional, problem solving approach.

The following steps will then be taken:

- a) Each individual in the case will be met and interviewed individually.
- b) "Gangs" may then be met as a group.
- c) Those involved may be asked to write down an account of the incident.
- d) Parents and guardians of the parties involved will be met (separately) where actions and reasons for them will be explained.

- e) Follow up meetings with all parties concerned to ensure that there is no repeat of the incident.
- f) In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded by the relevant teacher using the form in Appendix 1 – Form for Recording Bullying Behaviour.
- 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 must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows³:
- Contact will be made with the school NEPS psychologist for advice.
 - If counselling is deemed necessary (either for children who have been bullied or who engage in bullying behaviour) parents of the child affected will be directed to the appropriate agencies.
 - Pupils will be offered opportunities, within the classroom setting, to participate in activities designed to raise their self esteem to develop their friendship and social skills
 - Pupils who observe incidents of bullying will be encouraged to discuss them with teachers.

³ see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, September 2013*

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 12th November 2013 and reviewed annually.

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request and provided to the Parent Teacher 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, be readily accessible to parents and pupils on request and provided to the Parent Teacher Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: _____

Rev. Gillian Wharton, Chairperson of the Board of Management

Signed: _____

Rachel Fraser, Principal

Date: 22nd September 2015

Date of next review: September 2016