

Anti Bullying Policy Cloontagh N.S.

1. In accordance with the requirement of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of Cloontagh National School has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within 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 principals in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour.
 - A positive school culture and climate which
 - is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusively;
 - 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 matters) 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. 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
- identify-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.

Types of Bullying

The following are some of the types of bullying 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 isolate, 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 an communication technologies such as text, social network sites, e-mails, 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 hurt, 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, school books 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 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 delivering to another who is engaged in bullying behaviour.

4. The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying will normally be the class teacher or the teacher on supervision duty to whom the bullying incident was reported.

Education & Prevention Strategies

5. The education and prevention strategies that will be used by the school are as follows

- Raising awareness across all aspects of bullying will be an integral part of the Code of Behaviour and Discipline in Cloontagh N.S. During the school year bullying will be discussed on a regular basis as this topic will arise in many areas of the curriculum e.g., S.P.H.E., Religion, English and Drama.
- Whole school anti-bullying week at the start of the year.
- Stay Safe Programme

Initiatives and programmes focused on developing pupils awareness and understanding of bullying including its causes and effects will be used at various times during the year. This may involve using Personnel from H.S.E. to talk to children and parents on all aspects of Bullying.

Procedures for investigating and dealing with Bullying.

- The primary aim for the relevant teacher in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationship 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, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. In that way pupils will gain confidence in "telling". This confidence factor is of vital importance. It will 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;

- Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners will be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;
- 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 relationship of the parties involved as quickly as possible.
- It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset;
- Teachers will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents;
- 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.
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This will be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
- If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved will be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member will be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements;
- Each member of a group will be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher.
- It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s).
- 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 (by reference to the school policy). The school will give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils;

- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's Anti-bullying policy and efforts will be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the
- perspective of the pupil being bullied;
- It will also 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 or her parents and the school;
- Follow up meetings with the relevant parties involved will be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable. This can have a therapeutic effect;
- 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 will be recorded by the relevant teacher in the recording template included in this policy.
- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher will, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:
 - A) Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
 - B) Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
 - C) Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable; and
 - D) Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal;

- 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;
(see overleaf)
- In the event that a parents 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.

Procedures for recording bullying behaviour.

The Board of Management will ensure that the school has clear procedures for the formal noting and reporting of bullying behaviour and these will be documented in the school Anti-bullying policy. All records must be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour must adhere to the following.

While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated, recorded and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher will use his/her professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same; See Appendix 3.

The school's programme of support for working with pupil's affected by bullying is

1. S.P.H.E Programme
2. Anti Bullying week, (A) to raise awareness what bullying is and the consequences of bullying
(B) to give pupils / staff and school personnel guidelines on dealing with bullying.
3. Alive O Programme
4. H.S.E. support services when required, e.g., Social Worker, H.S.E. personnel to work with parents, children and school personnel when dealing with issues of bullying.
5. National Educational Psychological Services.
6. School Completion Co-ordinator.

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.

This policy has been made available to school personnel and is readily accessible to parents and pupils on request and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

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 and provided to the Parents' Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if required, to the patron and the Department. The Board will use the template overleaf for annual review.

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

Signed _____ Signed _____
(Chairperson Of B.O.M.) (Principal)

Date: _____ Date _____

Date of next review: _____