

Anti-Bullying Policy

Version	Description	Authors
October 2021	First version	Single manager

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 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 implementation of all aspects of this policy will be differentiated for each child to take into account:

- Each student’s ability to communicate, with each suspected instance dealt with on a case-by-case basis in agreement with school management. This includes such measures as the use of alternative augmented communication for interviews etc., such as visuals, PECS and other appropriate material.
- Each student’s understanding of the consequences of their actions or those of others, so that students are insofar as is possible, not held accountable for actions they could not reasonably be expected to be responsible for.

Our students are particularly vulnerable to bullying outside of school and the learning of generalisable life-skills and appropriate ways to deal with others is the ultimate aim of the school’s approach to dealing with suspected bullying.

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
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
- Supports for staff;
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies);

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- Whole school understanding of how autism may impact on theory of mind (perspective taking) and the ability to understand the mental states of others;
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy and current best practice in relation to managing incidences of bullying in a special school with the profile of need that our student body demonstrates, which will be an agenda item for all staff meetings

In accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, bullying is defined as: **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- name calling, intimidation, isolation/exclusion, physical aggression, extortion, damage to property.
- 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.

Carrigaline Community Special School

The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying are

- The class teacher(s) initially
- The Principal

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

- Prevention and awareness raising measures across all aspects of bullying involving strategies to engage pupils in addressing problems when they arise. Such strategies need to build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils
- Provide pupils with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth
- Prevention and awareness raising measures focusing on cyber-bullying by educating pupils on appropriate online behaviour and how to stay safe while online (Webwise lessons)
- All staff can influence attitudes to bullying behaviour in a positive manner
- The teaching of anti-bullying social skills
- Curriculum components and programmes which are particularly relevant to the prevention of bullying and the promotion of respect for diversity and inclusiveness. The SPHE curriculum makes specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the inter-related areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships. The Stay Safe & RSE programmes at primary level are personal safety skills programmes which seek to enhance children's self-protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying. The ethical programme emphasises respect for self and others. The post-primary programme includes similar learning through its SPHE and RSE programmes.
- The work may be extended into many other areas such as Art, Drama and Physical Education.
- Co-operation and group enterprise will be promoted through whole school activities.
- 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.

Investigation

The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame). With this in mind, the school's procedures are as follows:

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher(s) will exercise his/her/their professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred, what type if it has and how best the situation might be resolved.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher(s). In that way, pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should 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), caretakers, cleaners play a key role in being voices for children who may not yet have functional communication skills. They must be encouraged to report any incidents of suspected bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher. No staff member should feel that any incident is best left unmentioned, and any report made in good faith will be treated as such without fear of repercussions for staff.
- 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.
- It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset.
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.
- Initial investigations of bullying will be done in class where possible, but some incidents might be best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- All interviews should 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(s) should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This should 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 should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should 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 should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher.
- The principles of restorative justice shall be adhered to in resolving issues among students

Follow-Up

- Where the relevant teacher(s) has/have determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
- 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(s) that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken. The school should 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.
- It must be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required that 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 may be arranged separately with a view to bringing them together later if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.
- An additional follow up meeting with the parents of the children involved may take place after an appropriate time to ensure the matter has been resolved satisfactorily.
- 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 procedure.
- 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 rights to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Recording

It is imperative that bullying incidences are recorded in an objective and factual manner. Noting and reporting of bullying behaviour is to be documented using the template for recording bullying behaviour (Appendix A). All records must be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour will adhere to the following:

1. While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher(s), the relevant teacher(s) will use his/her/their professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.
2. If it is established by the relevant teacher(s) that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher(s) must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
3. The relevant teacher(s) must use the recording template to record the bullying behaviour and inform the Principal.

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying involves a whole school approach. Given the complexity of bullying behaviour, no one intervention/support programme works in all situations. Therefore, various approaches and intervention strategies may be used including suggesting that parents seek referrals to appropriate outside agencies to receive further support for the pupils and their families if needed.

Ratified by

Date

Appendix A Template for Recording Alleged Bullying Behaviour

Teacher completing this report	
Pupil being targeted for bullying	
Person(s) engaged in bullying behaviour	
Name of person(s) reporting bullying concern	
Role of person reporting concern	

Source of concern/report (tick)		Type of bullying (tick)	
Verbal report		Physical Aggression	
Phone call/text		Cyber-bullying	
Aladdin message/email		Name Calling	
Other (specify below)		Damage to Property	
Location where incident occurred		Intimidation	
Classroom		Isolation/Exclusion	
Playground		Malicious Gossip	
Corridors		Other (specify below)	
Other (specify below)			

Date, time when incident(s) occurred	
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Description of bullying behaviour

Action taken

Signature of teacher submitting report	
Date of report	
Date submitted to Principal	