



## Anti-Bullying Policy of Rathbeggan N.S.

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 Rathbeggan N.S. 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 teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying in Rathbeggan School are as follows:

The Class Teacher

The Principal

The Deputy Principal

**However any teacher in the school may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.**

5. 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:

- A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community
- The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping
- The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extra-curricular activities. Pupils will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.
- Whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develop an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying to include pupils, parent(s)/guardians and the wider school community

- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities. All teaching staff and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teacher(s). Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.
- Children will be encouraged through SPHE (Social, Personal and Health Education) lessons and Circle Time activities to include other children in their play and to ensure that no child is left isolated or excluded
- In line with our school ethos and Code of Behaviour, staff will seek to identify examples of positive and desirable behaviour among children
- School assembly will also be used as an occasion where positive behaviour is highlighted and reinforced
- Seeking the involvement of senior students (fifth/sixth class) in contributing to a safe school
- All new parents/guardians are to be given a copy of the anti-bullying policy
- An annual school **Friendship Week** to be organised in the first term to promote friendship and the prevention of bullying. School assemblies may also be used for this purpose.
- We will encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. 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.
- The implementation and regular review/ updating of our **Acceptable Use Policy** which will continue to ensure that access to technology within the school is strictly monitored.

### **Implementation of curricula**

- The full implementation of the SPHE curriculum to include the Stay Safe and RSE (Relationships and Sexuality Education) programmes
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from Stay Safe and Walk Tall programmes
- Other suitable materials such as the Bully Off programme may be used to supplement these programmes particularly where specific issues arise within the class
- NCTE( National Centre for Technology in Education) Webwise to be used as an anti-cyberbullying resource
- Garda SPHE programme to continue to be delivered by community garda covering issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying

### **Links to other policies**

School policies and practices and activities of particular relevance to bullying include Code of Behaviour, Child Protection Policy, Acceptable Use Policy, Aquatics Programme, Supervision, School Tours and Outings, Sport and Extra-curricular activities, SEN (Special Education Needs ) policy.

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:
  - Any pupil or parent(s)/ guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to the attention of any teacher in the school
  - All reports including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher(s)

- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as our secretary, special needs assistants, cleaner and caretaker should report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher(s).

### **Investigating and dealing with incidents**

- In investigating and dealing with bullying the relevant teacher(s) will exercise professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
- Parent(s)/ Guardian(s) 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;
- Teachers should always endeavour to take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach;
- Where possible incidents should be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
- All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. It should be noted that pupils who are not directly involved may also provide very useful information.
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher(s) should seek answers to questions of **what, where, when, who and why**.
- If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved may be met as a group. At such a meeting each member may 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 may face them from the other members of the group after such an interview. 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 parent(s)/guardian(s) of the parties involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken. The school will give parent(s) guardian(s)an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the pupils;
- Where it has been determined by the school 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 should 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 e.g. pupil(s), parent(s), guardian(s), that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parent(s)/ guardian(s) and the school.

### **Follow up and recording**

- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher should take the following factors into account:
- Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
- Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable;
- Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardian(s)or the school principal or Deputy Principal
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should 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;

- Where a parent/ guardian is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be referred , as appropriate, to the school's Complaints Procedure
- In the event that a parent/guardian has exhausted the school's Complaints Procedure and is still not satisfied, the school will advise the parent/guardian of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

### **Recording of bullying behaviour**

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

#### **Informal Pre-determination that bullying has occurred**

- All staff will keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. Records of such incidents will be written up in the school's Incident Book. All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher(s).
- While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher(s), the relevant teacher(s) must keep a written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.
- The relevant teacher will inform the principal of all incidents being investigated.

#### **Formal Stage Determination that bullying has occurred**

- 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.
- Copies of all such records will be kept in a secure location in the principal's office.

#### **Formal Stage 2 Appendix 3 from DES Procedures**

The relevant teacher will use the recording template at Appendix 3 to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

- a) In cases where it is considered that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after it has been determined that bullying behaviour occurred; **and**
- b) In the event of serious bullying behaviour which is in breach of the school's code of behaviour;

Examples of such serious misbehaviour would include:

- Harassment
- Physical Aggression
- Damage to property

- Name calling
- Slagging
- The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other material aimed at intimidating another person
- Offensive graffiti
- Extortion
- Intimidation
- Insulting or offensive gestures
- The “look”

**Cyberbullying behaviour** e.g.

- Denigration, Spreading rumours, lies or gossip to hurt a person’s reputation
- Harassment Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual
- Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls
- Abusive text messages
- Silent telephone/mobile phone calls
- Abusive posts on any form of communication technology

**Identity Based Behaviours** e.g.

- Spreading rumours about a person’s sexual orientation
- Name calling e.g. Gay, Lesbian...used in a derogatory way
- Discrimination, prejudice, comments about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, and ethnic or traveller background
- Exclusion on the basis of any of the above

**Relational Bullying** e.g.

- Isolation & exclusion
- Ignoring
- Taking someone’s friends away
- “Bitching”

- Spreading rumours
- Breaking confidence
- Talking loudly enough so that the victim can hear
- The “look”
- Use of terminology such as ‘nerd’ in a derogatory way

**Sexual** e.g.

- Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching
- Harassment

**Special Education Needs/ Disability** e.g.

- Name calling
- Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs
- Mimicking a person’s disability

Any of the behaviours outlined above should be recorded and reported immediately to the principal.

When the recording template (Appendix 3) is used it will be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy will be retained in the principal’s office. This record will also be accessible to the Deputy Principal and will be retained indefinitely.

**Established intervention strategies**

Intervention strategies may include any of the following;

- Teacher interviews with all pupils
- Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress
- Working with parent(s)//guardian(s) to support school interventions
- Circle Time
- Restorative interviews

7. The school’s programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows;

- The school will endeavour to provide in-school support for all pupils affected by bullying
- Opportunities will be provided for such pupils to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience

- If pupils require counselling or further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be for the pupil affected by the bullying or the pupil involved in the bullying behaviour.
- Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher

#### 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 25<sup>th</sup> June 2014 and reviewed annually.
11. This policy will be made available to school personnel, and published on the school website. Hard copies of the policy will be made available to new parents and guardians and to all parents and guardians on request . 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, 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.

The Anti Bullying Policy was reviewed at a Board of Management meeting held on November 10<sup>th</sup> 2022.