



Anti-Bullying Policy

Drumbaragh National School, Drumbaragh, Kells, Co. Meath A82NP98

Roll Number: 10801Q

In accordance with the Education Welfare Act (2000) and Code of Behaviour Guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of Drumbaragh National School has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the schools' overall Code of Behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools published September 2013.

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:

1. A positive school culture and climate which:

- is welcoming of difference and diversity and 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.

2. Effective Leadership:

- that supports a school culture and climate that celebrates difference, is key to good practice.
- in which the principal and all teachers strive to engender an ethos under which bullying is unacceptable.
- in which the principal and all teachers act as good role-models. They are fair, firm, clear and consistent in their disciplinary measures.

3. A School-Wide Approach:

- a positive school-wide attitude and involvement can assist considerably in countering bullying behaviour in schools.
- management, staff, parents, and pupils have a role and responsibility in helping our school to prevent and address school-based bullying behaviour and to deal with any negative impact within the school.
- Parents should also recognise that a school that openly discusses bullying is acting positively and that they need to work with our school to ensure there is a coherent, school-wide approach to tackling the issue.
- In certain cases, it may be necessary for the school to seek the assistance of other local person and formal agencies such as NEPS, HSE social workers, community workers, Gardaí etc.

- Guest speakers may be invited to speak with parents and the school community in relation to bullying.

A Shared Understanding of Bullying Behaviour and Its Impact

- All members of the school staff should have a shared understanding of what constitutes bullying behaviour as outlined in our school policy.
- From time to time, time may be taken to discuss bullying at staff meetings or guest speakers may be invited to speak with staff.

Implementation of Education and Prevention Strategies that-

- Build empathy, respect, and resilience in pupils.
- Explicitly address issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- Given the complexity of bullying behaviour, it is generally acknowledged that not one intervention works in all situations. A variety of some of the methods of intervention which teachers may use in our school include:
 - Each class being aware of our school rules which complement the school's Code of Behaviour.
 - A friendship/respect week may be held once annually during the year.
 - Anti-bullying posters and an anti-bullying display visible on the school corridors.
 - A recording form available to teachers to be used to record reports of bullying. Teachers will keep their own copy of completed reports for their own records and the original report will be stored in the Principal's office in a folder. (see Figure 1)
 - Always ensure supervision when pupils can access the internet.
 - Focus on the topic of bullying on at least one school assembly in Junior Classes and Senior Classes.
 - Walk Tall / Stay Safe programme is implemented in our SPHE classes.
 - Guest speakers may be invited to speak with pupils.
- Supports for Staff:
 - Staff have sufficient familiarity with anti-bullying policy to enable effective and consistent application when required, to recognise bullying, implement effective strategies for prevention, and where appropriate intervene effectively in bullying cases.
 - Temporary and substitute staff should have sufficient awareness of the school's code of behaviour and its anti-bullying policy.
 - A copy of the policy is available to teachers on the school website, and in the school office.
 - Staff have access to the Walk Tall and Stay Safe Teacher resources which cover topics relating to self-esteem, bullying, and telling a trusted adult.
 - Guest speakers and Continuing Professional Development talks on Bullying may be invited to speak with the school staff.

Consistent Recording, Investigation and Follow up of Bullying Behaviour

- The primary aim for the class teacher in dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

- The teacher will exercise professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
- All reports (including anonymous) of bullying, must be investigated and dealt with by the class teacher. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. It must be emphasised that reporting incidents of bullying are considered behaving responsibly.
- Non-teaching staff are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed or disclosed to them, to the class teacher.
- Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues as quickly as possible.
- It is important all parties involved 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.
- When assessing incidents of bullying behaviour, the class teacher should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why.
- If it is established that bullying has occurred, class teacher must keep appropriate written records which will assist efforts to resolve the issues.
- Teachers must use the relevant recording template at **Figure 1**, in cases where the class teacher considers bullying behaviour has taken place it is report it to the Principal, Ms. Sarah Clarke.
- Where bullying behaviour has occurred, the teacher should inform pupils of breaches to the school's anti-bullying policy and parents of the parties will be notified.
- Disciplinary sanctions may be required (**see School Code of Discipline & Behaviour Policy.**)
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved may be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is agreeable.
- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed, the teacher should take the following factors into account:
 1. Whether the bullying has ceased.
 2. Whether *any issues* between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable.

3. Whether *the relationships* between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable
- 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 (**see School Complaints Policy**).
- If 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.

On-Going Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy

- A checklist will be used in undertaking the annual review of our Anti-Bullying policy.
- 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.

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
- identity-based bullying such as homophobic or transphobic bullying
- racist bullying
- bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller Community.
- 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. (**see School Code of Behaviour & Discipline Policy**)

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 our school's code of behaviour (**see School Code of Behaviour & Discipline Policy**).

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.
- **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.
- **Isolation/exclusion and other relational bullying:** This occurs where a certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or all the class group. This practice is usually initiated by the person engaged in the bullying behaviour and can be difficult to detect. Relational bullying occurs when a person's attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected and undermined,
- **Cyber-bullying:** Bullying carried out using information and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, e-mail, instant messaging (IM), apps, gaming sites, chatrooms and other online technologies. (See school Anti-Cyber-Bullying policy)
- **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.
- **Damage to property:** Personal property can be the focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, schoolbooks and other learning material or interference with a pupil's property.
- **Extortion:** Demands may be made, often accompanied by threats (sometimes carried out in the event of the targeted pupil not delivering on the demand).

The following signs and symptoms *may* suggest that a pupil is being bullied:

- Anxiety about travelling to and from school. Refusal to attend school.
- Deterioration in educational performance, enthusiasm, and interest in school
- Patterns of physical illnesses.
- Unexplained changes in mood or behaviour, particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or school holidays.
- Visible signs of anxiety or distress.
- Possessions missing or damaged.
- Increased requests for money or stealing money.
- Unexplained bruising or cuts or damaged clothing.
- Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling him/her.

4. The **relevant teacher(s)** for investigation and dealing with bullying is/are:

- Class teacher
- The Principal, Ms. Clarke

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

- School Rules and Policy Implementation
- Assembly Time
- Drama lessons / Circle Time
- Anti-bullying posters and displays throughout the school.
- Stay Safe & Walk Tall Programme

8. 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. 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 in April 2015.

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on our school website, is 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 school patron if requested.

12. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management annually. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website, 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 requested, to the patron and the Department.

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