

Anti- Bullying Policy

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 *Cabra* Central 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.**
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- **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.**

Defining Bullying:

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.

Types of Bullying:

- **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 isolated, 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 and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, e-mail, 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 hurts, 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, stolen 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 delivery to another who is engaged in bullying behaviour.

3. Relevant Teachers:

The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows:

- A child or parent may bring a bullying concern to **any teacher** in the school.
- The relevant teachers who have the responsibility of investigating and dealing with bullying are both the mainstream teacher and the principal.
- Individual teachers must take appropriate measures regarding reports of bullying behaviour in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy.

4. Education and Prevention Strategies:

Cabra Central National school adopts a school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.

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 are as follows:

Creating a Culture of telling:

- **The staff of Cabra Central National School repeatedly reinforces the message that all incidents that could be deemed bullying behaviour must be reported. Reassurance is given that all incidents will be dealt with in a safe manner. Pupils will gain confidence in telling which is of vital importance.**
- **Bystanders can be the key to resolving bullying. It is made clear to all pupils that when they reports incidents they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.**
- **Teachers will ensure that pupils know who to tell and how to tell:**
 - **Talk to teacher at an appropriate time, e.g. after class or at break/ lunch time.**
 - **Written note in their copybook or Worry Box in the classroom.**
 - **Ask a parent/guardian to tell on their behalf.**
 - **Ask a peer/friend to tell on their behalf.**

Supervision and Monitoring:

- **Effective supervision of classrooms, corridors, playgrounds, school tours etc facilitates early intervention**
- **Non teaching staff are also encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers.**

- **Strict supervision of use of technology in the classroom and computer suite.**

Professional Development:

- **Ensure staff are up to date with AntiBullying Procedures and ways to prevent its occurrence in the first instance**
- **CPD in programmes designed to help prevent bullying instances such as Friends for Life.**

Education Strategies:

- ***Inform and educate children and parents of the anti-bullying policies and procedures in the school:***
- **Raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour through use of displays.**
- **Circulate anti-bullying literature to both parents and children to promote awareness of bullying.**
- **School rules used as tool to educate but also to discourage disrespectful behaviour.**
- **Friendship Groups established to strengthen pupil relationships and promote positive behaviour.**

Raise awareness of Cyber-bullying through the following:

- **Use of guest speakers.**
- **Holding cyber-bullying workshops for pupils and parents.**
- **S.P.H.E. lessons.**
- **HTML Heroes and My Selfie programme from Webwise for Senior room.**

Educate and promote the development of self-esteem/empathy and mutual respect:

- Using S.P.H.E. as platform to promote mutual respect and teach anti-bullying measures children are to apply themselves. Discuss and explore the issue of bullying directly through the Stay Safe and Walk Tall programmes.
- Teach children about rights and responsibility online and promote a positive use of technology.
- Using the Follow Me Programme to encourage children to have a loving relationship with each other.
- Building empathy and resilience through programmes such as Friends for Life.
- Use normal school interaction as opportunity to promote self respect and mutual respect.
- Organise structured games at lunch time for classes that struggle to interact positively together.
- Create a buddy system for children that may be a concern or potential threat.
- Create a positive inclusive environment in the school that supports and clearly outlines how to report a bullying incident.
- Educate children on how to be a good friend through circle time and role play.

5. 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 relationships of the parties involved.

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:

Reporting bullying behaviour:

- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. 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.
- All teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers, cleaners must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

Stage 1 - Informal Investigation and Action

- 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.
- Teachers will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.

Stage 1 – Informal recording, pre- determination that bullying has occurred

- All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher. These records will be kept in the office.
- The relevant teacher must inform the Principal of all incidents being investigated.

Stage 2 – Formal Investigation and Action

- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to the pupil how they are in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get the pupil to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
- 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).
- 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, their parents and the school.
- Details of the appropriate sanctions to be imposed are outlined in the School's Code of Discipline.
- 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.
- Incidents will generally 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.
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher will seek answers to questions of **who, what, where, when, 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 their 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 them from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher.
- Those involved may be asked to write down their account of the incident(s).

Stage 2 – Formal recording

- If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher 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.
- These records will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in the office and a unique identifier will be used to protect the children's identity.

Stage 3 – Formal Investigation

- 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 in the recording template(appendix 1)
- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:
 - Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
 - Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
 - Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable; and
 - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal.

Stage 3 – Formal Recording

The relevant teacher must use the recording template(appendix 1) to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

a) In cases where he/she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred; and

b) Where the school has decided as part of its anti-bullying policy that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

- In each of the circumstances at (a) and (b) above, the recording template must be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.
- These records will kept until all the children involved reach the age of 21.
- It should also be noted that the timeline for recording bullying behaviour in the recording template does not in any way preclude the relevant teacher from consulting the Principal or Deputy Principal at an earlier stage in relation to a case.

Follow up:

- 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.
- 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 follows:

- All pupils who have been involved in bullying behaviour will be supported in the first instance by the class teacher.
- If required opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self esteem and self worth; develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience will be organised.
- Further interventions where appropriate will be put in place on a case by case basis.

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.

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

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website 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, 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.

Signed: _____ Signed: _____

(Chairperson of Board of Management)
(Principal)

Date: _____

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____

Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the anti-bullying policy

The Board of Management of _____ wishes to inform you that:

The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of _____ [date].

This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in **Appendix 4** of the Department's *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Signed _____ Date

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _____ Date

Principal