

## Anglesboro N.S. Anti-bullying Policy

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 Anglesboro N.S. has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour.

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 to:

- A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that-
  - (1) Build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils
  - (2) Explicitly address the issue of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
  - (3) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
  - (4) Supports for staff
    - a) Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
    - b) On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.
    - c) Engaging parents.

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. This applies to all aspects of school life.

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- Physical aggression.
- Intimidation.
- Isolation/deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying.
- cyber-bullying
- Name calling.
- Damage to property.
- Identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveler community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.
- Extortion.

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.

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.

- Information on bullying provided in pupil friendly age appropriate format to be displayed in school.
- SPHE curriculum, Stay Safe programme covered annually in all classes.
- Educating children on appropriate online behavior – how to stay safe online and develop a culture of reporting concerns about cyber bullying.
- Guest speakers to give various talks over the course of the year.
- Supervision and monitoring of children at all times by staff on a rota basis.
- All school staff, including temporary and substitute teachers are to be made aware of school policy.
- Acceptable User Policy.
- Making parents aware of anti-bullying procedures and including parents in dealing with issues.

The class teacher will stay with the class during any visit of external coaches.

### **Procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying:**

Bullying behaviour can only be recognized after an investigation has taken place. Prior to an investigation the behavior is considered to be negative behaviour, otherwise the investigation is prejudiced.

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:

1. There will be a consistent and clear approach to dealing with bullying when it occurs.
2. A parent or pupil may bring a bullying concern to any teacher in the school. Individual teachers must take appropriate measures regarding reports of bullying behavior in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy. Every member of staff has a copy of the Code of Behaviour and Discipline. This policy contains clear guidelines on the procedures to be followed.
3. The primary aim for the relevant teacher in investigating the reported behavior is to establish if the behavior is bullying or not. In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgment to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
4. All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. Following the outcome of the investigation if bullying is determined, then a plan to deal with the issue will be put in place. This plan will consider the needs of the pupil bullying and the pupil being bullied and consider how relationships can be restored.
5. Parents and pupils are encouraged 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.
6. Through the Stay Safe Programme and SPHE lessons 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.
7. Non-teaching staff will be encouraged to report any incidents of negative behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.
8. Incidents will be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
9. All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned;
10. When analyzing incidents of bullying behavior, the relevant teacher will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why?
11. If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved will be met as a group;
12. It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s);
13. 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 children;
14. 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;
  15. 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.
  16. 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; arrange a review date at the initial meeting and put a plan in place and follow through within 20 days.
  17. 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.
  18. In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgment, take the following factors into account:
    - Has the incident of bullying been determined, following the investigation?
    - Has the pupil considered to be bullying had their awareness raised as to why their behavior is considered to be bullying?
    - Has the bullying behaviour ceased?
    - Have the issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable?
    - Has the relationships between the parties been restored as far as is practicable?
    - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal;
  19. There will be a six week review of all cases considered bullying to ensure any plans put in place are followed through and all parties are taken care of and satisfied with the outcome.
  20. 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 as per the school's Code of Behaviour and Discipline.
  21. In the event that a parent 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's anti-bullying policy. All records will 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 must be investigated 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;
- 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. Notes will be written with a view to being accessed.
- The relevant teacher must 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 at **Appendix 3** must be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable. It should also be noted that the timeline for recording bullying behaviour in the recording template at **Appendix 3** 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.

### **Referral of serious cases to the HSE**

1. In relation to bullying in schools, *Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011 (Children First)* and the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2011* provide that in situations where ‘the incident is serious and where the behavior is regarded as potentially abusive, the school must consult the HSE Children and Family Social Services with a view to drawing up an appropriate response, such as a management plan’.
2. Serious instances of bullying behaviour should, in accordance with the *Children First* and the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2011* be referred to the HSE Children and Family Services and/or Gardaí as appropriate.
3. The *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2011* also provide that where school personnel have concerns about a child but are not sure whether to report the matter to the HSE, the Designated Liaison Person must seek advice from the HSE Children and Family Social Services. ( Consult the Duty Social Worker)

### **Supports for pupils affected by bullying**

- a. A programme of support for pupils who have been bullied must be in place. Such pupils may need counseling and/or opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed.



- b. Pupils involved in bullying behaviour need assistance on an ongoing basis. For those with low self-esteem, opportunities should be developed to increase feelings of self-worth. It is, therefore, important that the learning strategies applied within the school allow for the enhancement of the pupil's self-worth. Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.
- c. Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour should be encouraged to discuss them with teachers through the Stay Safe Programme and SPHE lessons.

### **Ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti- bullying policy**

- 1. The effectiveness of the school's anti-bullying policy will be subject to continuous review in the light of incidents of bullying behaviour encountered.
- 2. The template in **Appendix 3** for recording and reporting bullying to the school Principal or Deputy Principal will be used. Data gathered from these reports will be regularly (at least once in every school year) collated and analyzed with a view to monitoring levels of bullying behaviour and identifying any particular issues that require attention or any significant trends in behaviour. A record of this analysis will be retained and be made available to the Board of Management. Appropriate responses to any issues identified will be drawn up and implemented.
- 3. The implementation and effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy will be included as an agenda item for staff meetings so as to ensure concerns about the policy or the welfare of individual pupils can be shared and effectively addressed.

### **Periodic summary reports to the Board of Management**

At least once in every school term, the Principal will provide a report to the Board of Management setting out:

- (i) the overall number of bullying cases reported (by means of the bullying recording template at **Appendix 3**) since the previous report to the Board and
- (ii) confirmation that all cases referred to at (i) above have been or are being, dealt with in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy and the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools*.

The minutes of the Board of Management meeting must record the above but in doing so must not include any identifying details of the pupils involved.

### **Annual Review by the Board of Management**

- 1. The Board of Management will undertake an annual review of the school's anti- bullying policy and its implementation by the school.
- 2. A standardised checklist as in Appendix 4 to be used.
- 3. The school must put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement identified by the review.
- 4. Written notification that the review has been completed must be made available to school personnel and given to Parents' Association.

5. A standardised notification which must be used is included at Appendix 4. A record of the review and its outcome must be made available, if requested, to the patron and Department of Education.

### **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. The principal will provide a report setting out the number of bullying cases in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy (7.1.1) at the BOM meetings held each term.

### **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 Traveler community.

This policy has been made available to school personnel, has been provided to Parents' Association and is readily accessible to parents. 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, using checklist (Appendix 4). Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, given to Parents' Association and be readily accessible to all parents on request. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: Maura Tracy Signed: Seán Kearney  
(Chairperson of Board of Management) (Principal)

Date: 23.2.23

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Date of next review: Feb 2024