

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Introduction:

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 Ennis 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 and was reviewed in September 2014.

The aim of Ennis National School's Anti-Bullying policy is

- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teachers, pupils, parents/guardians.
- To promote a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To ensure appropriate supervision and monitoring measures through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation.
- To develop procedures for noting, investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To implement a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour.
- To work with appropriate agencies in countering all forms of bullying and promoting anti bullying behaviour.

Statement on Bullying:

- Ennis National School promotes 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
 - promotes respectful relationships across the school community;
- Every person in the School is entitled to respect and to be free of any type of bullying.
- The School will work proactively, as far as it can, to ensure that bullying does not take place.
- Education and prevention strategies are implemented to build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils.
- Reporting incidents of bullying is responsible behaviour.
- Bullying behaviour will be recorded, investigated and followed up (including use of established intervention strategies)

Definition:

Bullying consists of **repeated** unwanted negative behaviour whether by word, by physical action or otherwise, directly or indirectly applied, by one or more persons against another person or persons which undermines the individual person's right to personal dignity.

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.

Indications of Bullying:

The following signs/symptoms may suggest that a pupil is being bullied:-

- anxiety about travelling to and from school - requesting parents to drive or collect them, changing route of travel, avoiding regular times for travelling to and from school;
- unwillingness to go to school, refusal to attend, ~~snitching~~ ~~snitching~~;
- deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school;
- pattern of physical illnesses (e.g. headaches, stomach aches);
- unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour; it may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or more especially after longer school holidays;
- visible signs of anxiety or distress - stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, bedwetting;
- spontaneous out-of-character comments about either pupils or teachers;
- 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.

Those signs do not necessarily mean that a pupil is being bullied. If repeated or occurring in combination these signs do warrant investigation in order to establish what is affecting the pupil

Strategies for Prevention of Bullying

- Staff at all times endeavour to encourage pupils to show respect for each other.
- The SPHE curriculum, including the Walk Tall and Stay Safe programmes, is used throughout the school to support the anti-bullying policy. The SPHE curriculum

provides opportunities for role playing bullying incidents and conflict resolution.

- Positive self-esteem is fostered among the pupils by celebrating individual differences, by acknowledging good behaviour and by providing opportunities for success.
- Pupils are helped to develop empathy by discussing feelings and by trying to put themselves in the place of others.
- There is a **Time-Out** area on all yards for dealing with instances of disrespect.
- **Buddy Stops** and **Buddy Stations** are in use in the Junior playground.
- Teachers respond sensitively to pupils who disclose incidents of bullying.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed regularly with the pupils.
- Notebooks are used by staff on playgrounds to record incidents of misbehaviour. These books are monitored regularly to check for patterns of misbehaviour and of bullying behaviour.
- Staff are particularly vigilant in monitoring pupils who are considered at risk of bullying/ being bullied.
- All disclosed incidents of bullying are investigated.

Maintaining awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour

Ennis National School emphasises and reinforces the view that bullying behaviour is unacceptable by

- Using both the formal and informal curriculum to emphasise that bullying is unacceptable... visual arts activities, posters, drama, role play, SPHE, cooperative games...
- Devising a school anti-bullying charter, slogan or rhyme for display in classrooms and other prominent locations
- Hosting an **Anti-Bullying Week** in each school year to raise pupils awareness and understanding about the nature and unacceptability of bullying in our school. This aims to enable the children to **Recognise**, **Reject** and **Report** bullying when they see it.

Procedures for Dealing with Instances of Bullying:

The primary aim 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 (rather than to apportion blame). With this in mind the school's procedures are as follows:

- I. In investigating and dealing with bullying the teacher(s) will exercise his/her/their judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred, what type if it has and how best the situation might be resolved.
- II. All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the ~~R~~ 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 instances of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
- III. Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, SNAs, caretakers and cleaners are encouraged to report any incidences of bullying behaviour witnessed by them or

- mentioned to them to the Class Teacher.
- IV. Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.
 - V. On being informed of an alleged incident of bullying, the teacher dealing with the report will first interview the victim(s) and discuss the feelings which the victim(s) experienced because of the bullying behaviour.
 - VI. 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.
 - VII. When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour the ~~Relevant Teacher(s)~~ should seek answers to questions of what, where, who, when and why. This should be done in a clam manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
 - VIII. It may be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s).
 - IX. 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 the other's statements.
 - X. 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.
 - XI. 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 perspective of the pupil being bullied.
 - XII. The ~~Relevant Teacher~~ does not apportion blame but rather treats bullying behaviour as a ~~mistake~~ that can and must be remedied. S/he emphasises that the intention is not to punish perpetrators but to talk to them, to explain how harmful and hurtful bullying is and to seek a promise that it will stop. If that promise is forthcoming and is honoured there will be no penalty and that will be the end of the matter.
 - XIII. When an investigation is completed and/or a bullying situation is resolved the ~~Relevant Teacher~~ will complete a report, to include the findings of the investigation, the strategy adopted and the outcome of the intervention, as well as any other relevant information.
 - XIV. If a pupil chooses to continue the bullying behaviour, this can then no longer be considered a ~~mistake~~. In this event parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted. 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 the pupil.
 - XV. Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved may be arranged separately with a view to bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.
 - XVI. Depending on the seriousness of the bullying some or all of Level 2 Supportive Interventions will be utilized (See School Code of Behaviour)

- XVII. Repeated incidents of bullying behaviour will result in the imposition of sanctions. Such sanctions will be proportionate to the seriousness of the bullying behaviour. 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.
- XVIII. Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent must be referred to the school's complaints procedure.
- XIX. 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.
- XX. The School will maintain care for the victim over time. This will be done by speaking to the child a number of weeks after the incident to check on their continuing welfare. The child's parents will also be consulted.

Procedures for Recording, Noting and Reporting of Bullying:

- a. While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the ~~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.
- b. If it is established by the ~~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 practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- c. The ~~the~~ Relevant Teacher(s) must record the bullying incident on the school information management system (Aladdin) by adding a Bullying Report Template to the relevant pupil's file which will be visible on files on all other pupils named. The ~~the~~ Relevant Teacher must inform the Principal.

Supporting Pupils affected by Bullying:

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.

- Supporting Bullied pupils:
 - Ending the bullying behaviour,
 - Fostering respect for bullied pupils and all pupils,
 - Fostering greater empathy towards and support for bullied pupils,
 - Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through annual awareness-raising programmes,
 - Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the speedy identification of those responsible and speedy resolution of bullying situations,
 - Making adequate counselling facilities available to pupils who need it in a timely manner (subject to available funding)

- Helping bullied pupils raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school).
- Supporting Bullying pupils:
 - Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are not blamed or punished and get a clean sheet,
 - Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are doing the right and honorable thing and giving them praise for this,
 - Making adequate counseling facilities available to help those who need it learn other ways of meeting their needs besides violating the rights of others,
 - Helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school),
 - Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils' feelings of self-worth,
 - In dealing with negative behavior in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child,
 - In dealing with bullying behaviour seeking resolution and offering a fresh start with a clean sheet and no blame in return for keeping a promise to reform.

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 at its meeting in _____ 2014.