Anti-Bullying Policy 2022

1. Introduction

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the Code of Behaviour guidelines issued by the National Education and Welfare Board, the Board of Management of Leixlip Educate Together National School has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall Code of Positive 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

The Board of Management recognizes 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. Definition of 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 additional 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 Positive 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 Positive 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.*

See Appendix 3 for possible indicators of bullying behaviour.

4.Relevant teacher

The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are the Principal and all class teachers. Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

5. Education and prevention strategies

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:

School-wide Approach

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, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.

• The fostering and enhancing the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Pupils will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.

• Pupils will be encouraged to use strategies relating to conflict resolution and to develop their self reliance.

• School wide awareness-raising on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, staff and parent(s)/guardian(s).

• Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds and school tours. Non teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.

• Involvement of the Student Representative Group (when applicable) in contributing to a safe school environment

• The school's anti-bullying policy is available to view on the school website and available in hard copy on request from the school. It is also provided along with the Code of Positive Behaviour of the school to all new parents/guardians.

• The implementation of whole school awareness measures e.g. the promotion of friendship, and bullying prevention; Friendship Week and regular school assemblies.

• Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. 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 incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.

• Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.:

- Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.

- Hand note up with homework.

- Anti-bully box / Worry Box

- Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.

- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.

- Ensure that parents/guardians are reminded to use the communications policy of the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied.

  - The school is developing an Acceptable Use Policy to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored.
  - As part of our 2022 review the Board of Management and staff will undertake to formulate an Action Plan to implement the Department of Education's recommendations as outlined in Appendix 2.

Implementation of Curricula
The full implementation of the Social Personal and Health Education curriculum and the Relationships and Sexuality Education and Stay Safe Programmes.

• Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
• School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes, e.g. Stay Safe Programme and The Walk Tall Programme.

• The school will specifically consider the additional needs of Additional Educational Needs pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.

• The school will implement the advice in "Sexual Orientation advice for schools" published by the Professional Development Service for Teachers (See Appendix 2)

Other Relevant School Policies

Other school policies (both ratified and in draft stage) that are particularly relevant to anti-bullying are the Code of Positive Behaviour, Child Safeguarding Statement, Supervision Policy, Attendance Strategy, Communication Policy (in draft stage), Acceptable Use Policy, Mobile Phone and Electronic Devices Policy (when developed), SPHE Policy, and RSE Policy

6. Procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying

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 (see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):

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);

The school's procedures must be consistent with the following approach. Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s)) understand this approach from the outset.

Reporting bullying behaviour

Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.

All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.

Teaching and non-teaching staff such as the school administrator, Additional Needs Assistants (ANAs) must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;

Investigating and dealing with incidents: Style of approach

In investigating and dealing with bullying, the (relevant)teacher will exercise his/her 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 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 should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way;

• When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner;

• It may 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 that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the parties involved should 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 should 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 the relevant teacher has 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 situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;

• It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and 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 will, 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;

-Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardian(s)s or the school Principal

• 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 ready and agreeable.

• Where a parent(s)/guardian(s) 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 Communication Policy (draft) /Complaints Procedure.

• In the event that a parent(s)/guardian(s) has exhausted the school's Communication Policy (draft) /Complaints Procedure and is still not satisfied, the school will advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Recording of bullying behaviour

The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

● All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher must keep a written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same

● The relevant teacher must inform the principal of all incidents being investigated.

● If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must keep written records of the actions taken to address the bullying

● Written records relating to the investigation of bullying will be kept in the class behaviour file which is stored in the locked press in each classroom

The relevant teacher must use the recording template at Appendix 1 to record the bullying behaviour 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.

When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in the class behaviour file. A copy of the completed record of bullying behaviour will be kept in the behaviour file of any other class where a child in that class is named on the form. In line with school policy on all other documents relating to pupil behaviour, these forms will be retained until the youngest child in the class reaches the age of 21.

Established intervention strategies

● A no-blame problem-solving approach

● Teacher interviews with all pupils

● Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be on an

informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process
- Working with parent(s)/guardian(s)s to support school interventions
- Circle Time
- Restorative interviews with a view to repairing relationships damaged by bullying
- Implementing sociogram questionnaires
- Peer mediation where suitable training has been given
- Strengthening the victim
- Mediation
- Restorative Practice
- The Support Group Method

7. Programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows (see Section 6.8.16 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools) :

All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience e.g.

– Pastoral care

– Buddy / Peer mentoring

– Group work such as circle time

– Social Stories

– Recommended counselling

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. The school has recently developed a comprehensive Supervision Policy with which all staff are familiar with.

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. Adoption of this policy

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management on November 23rd, 2022.

11. Publication of this policy

This policy has been made available to school personnel and will be published on the school website. A hard copy of the policy is available to parents/guardians on request. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

12. Implementation of this policy

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 and published on the school website. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: Date:23rd November 2022

Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: Date:23rd November 2022

Principal

Date of next review: November 2023

Template for recording bullying behaviour

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name _____Class_____

2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

_____

_____

_____

3. Source of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es))

Pupil concerned ☐ Other Pupil ☐ Parent/Guardian ☐ Teacher ☐ ANA ☐ Other ☐

4.Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))

Playground ☐ Classroom ☐ Corridor ☐ Toilets ☐ Other ☐

5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern:

_____

_____

6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) Name Calling ☐ Physical Aggression ☐ Isolation/Exclusion ☐

Damage to Property ☐ Intimidation ☐ Malicious Gossip ☐ Cyber-bullying ☐ Identity-based bullying ☐ Other (specify)

☐_____

7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:

Gender-based ☐ Homophobic Disability/SEN related ☐ Racist or Membership of Traveller Community ☐ Civil Status/
Family-based ☐ Other (specify) ☐ _____

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact: _____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

9. Details of actions taken
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Signed _____(Relevant Teacher) **Date** _____

Date submitted to Principal_____

Appendix 2 Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate
As part of our 2022 review, the staff will adopt an action plan to ensure the implementation of the following to help build a positive school culture and climate and to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour.

- Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.
- Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.
- Catch them being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or AEN.
- Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.
- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.
- Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use.
- Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.
- Actively involve parents and/or the Parents, Guardians and Teachers Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media.
- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.
- Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.
- All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- Ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.
- School staff can get pupils to help them to identify bullying "hot spots" and "hot times" for bullying in the school.
    - o   Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas, changing rooms, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision.
    - o   Hot times again tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when pupils are in the playground/school yard or moving classrooms.
- Support the establishment and work of student councils.

Appendix 3 - Possible indicators of bullying behaviour

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

- Anxiety about travelling to and from school e.g. requesting parents/guardians to drive or collect him/her, changing travel routes, avoiding regular times for travelling to and from school; - Unwillingness to go to school, refusal to attend, truancy;

- 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 which may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or more especially after longer school holidays - Visible signs of anxiety or distress e.g. 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; and

- Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling him/her.