

Our Lady Queen of the Apostles, NS.

Anti-Bullying Policy

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the Code of Behaviour and Discipline guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of Our Lady Queen of the Apostles National School has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall Code of Behaviour and Discipline. 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 (see appendix 1)
 - 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
 - Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils during the school day
 - 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. 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, extortion, isolation and persistent name calling, slagging including offensive remarks in relation to family members
- physical aggression, damage to property, intimidation
- cyber-bullying which we understand in this school to be deliberately hurting someone's feelings using information and communication technology
- 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 do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour and Discipline.

However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful text message, public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum, while in school or when engaging in school related activities, where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour. Breaches of this nature will be dealt with in conjunction with our Mobile Phone Policy, Acceptable Use Policy and The Code of Behaviour and Discipline.

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour and Discipline.

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

4. The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows: Every reported incident of bullying will be investigated. When a child reports an incident of bullying the **class teacher** will carry out the investigation. Should the teacher feel the seriousness of the incident warrants further investigation, or in the case of repeated infractions a referral will be made to the **Principal or Deputy Principal**.
5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber- bullying and identity-based bullying that will be used by the school are as follows (see Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):
 - Staff at all times will encourage pupils to show respect for each other
 - The Stay Safe Programme will be fully implemented in the school
 - Parents/Guardians are encouraged to visit the Stay Safe website and a link is provided from the school website
 - The holding of a Friendship Week each year in conjunction with the Stay Safe Programme
 - The SPHE curriculum provides opportunities for role playing bullying incidents and conflict resolution
 - Extra-curricular activities are encouraged to help develop pupils self esteem and experience the discipline of following rules in sport
 - Group discussion eg. Circle Time is used throughout the school
 - Speakers will be invited to address staff and parent groups in relation to cyber-bullying
 - Information relating to cyber-bullying will be made available on the school website
 - An Internet Safety Week will be held annually
 - Utilise the ‘no blame’ or ‘peer support’ approach to bullying when deemed necessary
 - Classes from 3rd to 6th will complete lessons from ‘The Anti-bullying Awareness Handbook 1’ from ‘Anti-bullying campaign.ie’
 - FRIENDS for life – self-esteem programme introduced in 5th class (2014) and 2 teachers trained. Two teachers trained in Fun Friends and this has been introduced to 2nd class.
 - Teach children our anti-bullying strategies – **SAY NO, GET AWAY AND TELL** with special emphasis to children with SEN
 - Educate parents/guardians with a talk on Cyber-bullying through E-Safety
 - All children will be educated on what bullying is, prevention strategies and its impacts on a continuous basis

6. 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*) :

- Each teacher will record any serious incident of negative behaviour within the classroom
- Should the teacher feel the seriousness of the incident warrants it, or in case of repeated infractions the teacher will record the incident/s and pass on to the Principal or Deputy Principal for further investigation
- When a child reports an incident of bullying, the class teacher will carry out the investigation, and record the details
- If a pattern of bullying emerges then this will be dealt with by the class teacher and reported if necessary to the Principal
- Every reported incident of bullying will be investigated
- If a pupil is involved in any incidents of intentional negative behaviour then the child's parents/guardians are informed through a note in the journal
- A further incident will involve parents/guardians coming in to speak to the Principal
- If matters aren't resolved at this stage it may be necessary to consider suspension
- At all stages records will be kept of any intervention used to resolve the difficulties

The procedure to be followed should be:

- Speak to the victim privately
- Speak to the alleged perpetrator.
- Witnesses, if any should be spoken to, separately.
- If after investigation, it is established that bullying has taken place a written record will be kept in the Principals office. The names of victim, bully and witnesses will be recorded with the nature of the bullying.
- The alleged bully will be asked to reflect on his/her behaviour and its consequences for himself/herself and for the person who is the victim using Restorative Practices
- An effort will be made to resolve any issues and to restore as far as practicable the relationships
- If the bullying incident is of a very serious nature, the disciplinary procedures of the school will be followed.
- In such cases the parents/guardians will be required to co-operate with any investigation and to take steps to ensure non-repetition of the bullying.
- In the very rare event of the parents/guardians of a culprit refusing to co-operate with the school in bringing about an improvement or change of attitude, the school board has the right to suspend a child.
- The school carries out a follow-up check on both bully and victim.

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*) :

- All staff dealing with a bullying incident will, as well as reasoning with the pupil perpetrating the negative behaviour, also offer support and comfort to the victim
- In more serious incidents the victim parents/guardians will be informed
- In addition to strategies mentioned in paragraph 5 above, the school will reinforce our shield statements
- Use of Restorative Practice strategies
- The School Completion Programme will play a role with relevant programmes eg. self esteem programme
- Children will be encouraged to get involved in choir and concerts, football training and matches, green schools, students council, homework clubs, rainbow club, music club, enrichment club, Tuesday club, arts displays, science fairs and other such social activities
- The school will endeavour to identify 'hotspots' where bullying may occur and ensure adequate adult supervision
- Particular account will be taken of the importance and unique role pupils with Special Educational Needs play in our school

8. Restorative Practice

Restorative practice strives to build relationships by establishing trust with and between people, develop empathy and insight, and learning to repair any harm that may have been caused. The following actions have undertaken to introduce it to our school:

- Mrs. Ryan, Ms. Kinlough and Mr. Murphy attended a presentation in St. Marks N.S., Tallaght to learn about the process.
- Four staff members from St. Marks N.S., Tallaght visited our school to give a more in-depth presentation to the whole staff.
- At a staff meeting in May 2015, the staff decided to embrace Restorative Practice. A steering group consisting of Ms. Kinlough, Ms. Burke, Ms. Donlon and Mr. Murphy was established to over-see its implementation.
- The steering group decided, at a meeting on 17th June 2015, to devise a programme for each class, beginning in September 2015, dealing with the language of emotions, use of circle-time, use of a 'feelingometer' and use of Restorative Practice questions to assist in conflict resolution. This has been introduced into each class.

9. 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.

10. 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.

11. This policy was first adopted by the Board of Management on 28/04/2014.
12. 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.
13. 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.
14. This policy was reviewed and adopted by the BOM at its meeting on 16/04/2018.

Signed: Séan McNamara
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: _____

Signed: John Murphy
(Principal)

Date: _____

Date of next review: 2019