Trinity P.S. Tuam

Anti-Bullying Policy

Anti-bullying Policy

1.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 Trinity Primary School, Tuam 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. Key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying 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 includes:

- Being welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
- Encouraging pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
- Promoting 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-
- Building empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
- Explicitly addressing 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

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.

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in section 2 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools and appendix 3 of this document.

4.Responsibility

The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is the class teacher. Any teacher can act as class teacher if warranted or if an issue is reported to them.

5.Education & 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:

Specific Programmes
- The SPHE curriculum: This makes specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the related areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships.
- The Stay Safe programme: This is a personal safety skills programme which seeks to enhance children's self-protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying.
- The Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) programme provides opportunities to explore and discuss areas such as human sexuality and relationships, which has particular relevance to identity-based bullying.
- Various other social, health and media education programmes available in the school will further help to address the problem of bullying behaviour.

School wide approach
- There is space within the teaching of all subjects to foster an attitude of respect for all: to promote the value of diversity; to address prejudice and stereotyping and to highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- Fostering respect for all in the school community and promoting the value of diversity
- Fostering self esteem through curricular and extra curricular activities
- Raising staff awareness and availing of CPD opportunities
- School wide raising of awareness
- Good supervision and monitoring systems
- Involvement of students in contributing to a safe respectful school through supervised inter class initiatives and the students' council and friendships activities like friendship week.
- Discuss the policy with students and parents
- Ensuring that students are confident in telling if there is an issue and that they know who they can tell.
- Have an acceptable ICT usage policy
- Have a protocol in place for parents/guardians to be able to relate information to the school

6.Procedures for reporting, investigating, recording and following up

- **Reporting alleged incidents of bullying**

    - A pupil/ parent/staff member or member of the public can bring a bullying concern/incident to any teacher in the school. This teacher is then responsible for taking appropriate measures regarding reports of bullying behaviour in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy.

Procedures for investigating and recording an incident with a bullying concern

The primary aim for the relevant teacher in investigating and dealing with bullying is **to bring to an end and resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved**.

I. All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. In this way, our pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'.

II. When an incident is reported to a teacher, the teacher will **inform the principal (in person or by email)** that an incident has been reported/happened and they are investigating to see if bullying has occurred.

III. The relevant teacher will try to gather as much information as possible.
    - This will usually involve individual interviews with students.
    - Teachers will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.
    - Incidents will generally be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved and with another staff member present. 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 information.
    - It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s);
    - When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who 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. Afterwards, if appropriate, all those involved may be met as a group. Each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements.
    - The relevant teacher should make some notes of the who what when of the incident.

IV.   After investigating the alleged incident of bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred.

V.   If the decision is that bullying has not occurred and that it is negative or disruptive behaviour then the teacher will deal with it by referring to the school code of behaviour if necessary. The principal will be informed of this.

VI.   If the decision is that it was an incident of bullying then the teacher will fill in sections 1-8 of our bullying report form (Appendix 1 Template for recording bullying behaviour) and provide a copy to the principal.

The report form will detail the incident(s)
Section 9 will outline the next steps which will include parental consultation and drawing up of a plan of action with the principal.

VII. 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 to discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils.

- 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;
- It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset;
- Vulnerable members of a group will be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher;
- 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.
- 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.
- 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. Details of the incidents will be recorded in written form, to provide a record and to aid in resolving the issues.
- In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has stopped after 20 school days, they will record this as closed in the recording template follow up section.

- If the teacher feels that it has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it will be recorded by the relevant teacher in the recording template in the follow up section as well as the next step to be taken.
- 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; and
  - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal;
- 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;
- 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.Support for pupils affected by bullying

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows :

Pupils who have been bullied

The nature of the support provided for pupils who have been bullied will be commensurate with the severity, duration and effect of the bullying. Supports will range from;

- Occasional check back by the relevant teacher to ensure no recurrence has taken place.
- Occasional check back by the principal, if he/she has been involved, to ensure no recurrence has taken place.
- Longer 1:1 session with the relevant teacher
- Longer 1:1 session with the principal
- Liaison with parents through HSCLC
- 1:1 with SCP coordinator
- Therapeutic support through SCP
- Referral to NEPS
- Referral to HSE/CAMHS

Pupils who have been involved in bullying

The nature of the support provided for pupils who have been involved in bullying will be commensurate with the severity, duration and effect of the bullying. Supports will range from;

- Occasional check back by the relevant teacher to ensure no reoccurrence has taken place.

- Occasional check back by the principal, if he/she has been involved, to ensure no reoccurrence has taken place.
- Longer 1:1 session with the relevant teacher
- Longer 1:1 session with the principal
- Liaison with parents through HSCLC
- 1:1 with SCP coordinator
- Therapeutic support through SCP
- Referral to NEPS
- Referral to HSE/CAMHS

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. At least once in every school term, the Principal must provide a report to the Board of Management setting out: (i) the overall number of bullying cases reported (by means of the DES bullying recording template) 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 AntiBullying 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. The Board recognises that this good practice may also include details on the number of incidents in previous years to monitor if there has been any increase or decrease in numbers.

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. Ratification

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management in March 2021

This policy has been made available to school personnel and published on the school website, and provided to the Parents' Council. 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. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Appendix 1 Template for recording bullying behaviour

1. **Name of the pupil being bullied and class group**

Name _____ Class_____

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

3.Source of bullying concern/report

4. Location of incidents

Playground		Toilets	
Classroom		School Bus	
Corridor		Other	

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

Pupil concerned		Teacher	
Other Pupil		Other	
Parent			

6. **Type** of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) *

Physical Aggression		Cyber-bullying	
Damage to Property		Intimidation	
Isolation/Exclusion		Malicious Gossip	
Name Calling		Other (specify)	

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

Homophobic	Disability/SEN	Racist	Traveller	Other (specify)

8. **Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact**

9. **Details of actions taken/to be taken**
   (Should include plan to be drawn up in consultation with parents and principal)

Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher)

Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

Follow up Section
The bullying has been addressed and the case is now closed.
Yes
No   Teacher   Date
If No, what actions are to be taken next?

Appendix 2: Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation

Yes /No

Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*?	
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	
Is the Board satisfied that school staff are sufficiently familiar with the policy and procedures to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy and procedures in their day to day work?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	
Has the Board discussed how well the school is handling all reports of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and not therefore included in the Principal's periodic report to the Board?	
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	
Has the data available from cases reported to the Principal (by the bullying recording template) been analysed to identify any issues, trends or patterns in bullying behaviour?	
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	

Signed _____   Date _____   Chairperson,
Board of Management

Signed _____   Date _____ Principal

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

To: _____

The Board of Management of Trinity Primary School, Tuam 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*. (appendix 2 in this policy)

Signed ___Nuala McGuinn___   Date ___31/08/22___
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed ___Loreine Burke___   Date ___31/8/22___
Principal

Appendix 3: Types of Bullying

The following are **some** types of bullying behaviour that can occur amongst pupils:

○ **Physical aggression**: Includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking and tripping people. It may also be severe physical assault. While pupils often engage in 'mess fights', they can be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.

○ **Intimidation:** Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation: it may be using aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon. Particularly upsetting are facial expressions conveying 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 publically, passing notes or drawings of the pupil or whispering insults 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. A common form 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 is increasingly common and evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of ICT 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/hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying. As cyber-bullying 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 namecalling 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 can operate at two extremes, those singled out for attention because they are perceived to be weak academically or 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.

Teacher Checklist in the event of a report

1.Report is noted by teacher	
2.Principal informed that report being investigated	
3.Information gathered from as many students as necessary	
4. Notes kept on the incident	
5.Decision made on nature of incident/report	
6. If not bullying then refer to code of behaviour	
7. If deemed bullying then principal informed, report template filled and copy to principal	
8. Parents informed and plan drawn up in consultation with principal	
9.Efforts made to solve the situation including meetings with students/sanctions etc.	
10. Follow up and monitoring	