



## **Ardnagrath National School**

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### **Anti Bullying Policy**

#### **Introduction and rationale**

This policy has been put in place following consultation with staff, parents, pupils and the Board of Management. The policy was formulated with input from all of the above mentioned and was documented after in-school workshops for pupils, parents and staff in November 2013

**1.** 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 Ardnagrath 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* 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. *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;

**B. *Effective leadership.***

**C. *A school-wide approach;***

**D. *A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;***

**E. *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.

**F. Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;**

**G. Supports for staff;**

**H. Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and**

**I. 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
- verbal abuse
- physical aggression,
- extortion,
- damage to property
- intimidation
- name calling
- telephone calling, text messaging and 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*.

**4.** The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows:

The principal / vice principal and class teacher. Where appropriate other teachers will deal with bullying. In general, all staff members must be vigilant at all times, and have a duty to report suspected or potentially bullying behaviour.

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber- bullying, homophobic and transphobic 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):

#### **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 of 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.
- Whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develops an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it-prevention and intervention.
- An annual audit of professional development needs with a view to assessing staff requirements through internal staff knowledge/expertise and external sources
- Professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teacher(s)
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra- curricular activities. 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 council in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Buddy system, mentoring, Lunchtime Pals and other student support activities that can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school-to be included in student journals and displayed publicly in classrooms and in common areas of the school.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parent(s)/guardian(s) are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school (every year).
- The implementation of regular (e.g. per year/per term/per month/per week) whole school awareness measures e.g. a dedicated notice board in the school and classrooms on the promotion of friendship, and bullying prevention; annual Friendship Week and parent(s)/guardian(s) seminars; annual or term or monthly student surveys; regular school or year group assemblies by principal, deputy principal, year heads etc.
- 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
  - Make a phone call to the school or to a trusted teacher in the school.
  - 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.

Identify clear protocols to encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied. The protocol should be developed in consultation with parents.

#### **Implementation of curricula**

- The full implementation of the SPHE, the RSE 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, The Walk Tall Programme,
- School wide delivery of lessons on **Relational aggression , Cyber Bullying , Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying and Interculturalism,**
- The needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately will be addressed
- The school will implement the advice in “Sexual Orientation advice for schools” (RSE Primary, see booklet).

#### **Links to other policies**

The policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to bullying include the following : Code of Behaviour, Child Protection policy, Acceptable Technology Use policy, Attendance, swimming.

**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):

#### **6.8.9. Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with 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);**

**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 secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners 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;
- 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 each other's statements;
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after the interview by the teacher; It may also 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 must, 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) or the school Principal or Deputy Principal
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should 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) must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
- In the event that a parent(s)/guardian(s) has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

## **Recording of bullying behaviour**

It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner.

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

### **Informal- pre-determination that bullying has occurred**

- All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. Incidents of minor significance occurring in the playground or outside of the classroom will be recorded in the incident book, and all incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher. Incidents of a serious nature will be recorded and maintained separately so as to safeguard the privacy of the individual / group involved.
- While 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.

### **Formal Stage 1-determination that bullying has occurred**

- If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the 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.

### **Formal Stage 2-Appendix 3 (From DES Procedures)**

The relevant teacher must use the recording template at **Appendix 3** to 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.

The school should list behaviours that must be recorded and reported immediately to the principal. These should be in line with the school's code of behaviour.

When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal. Due consideration needs to be given to where these records are kept, who has access to them, and how long they will be retained.

### **Sanctions and action**

If the behaviour is of a severe bullying nature or escalates, the situation becomes more serious, and some or all of the following sanctions may be applied:

Continued reasoning with the pupil and advice on how to behave.

Loss of various privileges.

Parents may be requested to escort their child to and from school.

In very serious cases it is within the power of the Board of Management to exclude a pupil for a period or ultimately to expel a pupil.

The school may seek assistance and advice from outside agencies if necessary, including the National Educational Psychological Service, the national Educational Welfare Board and HSE.

**The aim of the school will always be reconciliation and resolution of conflict.**

### **Established intervention strategies**

- 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) to support school interventions
  - No Blame Approach
  - Circle Time
  - Restorative interviews
  - Restorative conferencing
  - Implementing sociogram questionnaires
  - Peer mediation where suitable training has been given
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- The perpetrator will be warned of the consequences should there be further bullying behaviour.
  - The situation will be monitored closely.
  - Parents may be informed.

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

**Victim:** Those who have been subjected to bullying will be supported through the pastoral structures in the school that nurture each individual child. Support will be provided for anyone who has been / is being bullied by offering them an immediate opportunity to talk about their experience with their teacher or another staff member. A victim will be assured that the school community will help them and put monitoring procedures in place to safeguard them. Children have the opportunity to participate in social skills lessons designed to raise their self-esteem and to develop their friendship and social skills. The victims may have counselling organised by outside agencies.

**Perpetrator:** Those who have been found to have engaged in bullying will be encouraged to recognise the inappropriateness of such behaviour and the seriousness of its effects on others. Help and support will also be sought for the bully. This will include speaking to them to try and discover why they became involved in bullying. For those low in self-esteem, opportunities will be afforded to develop feelings of self-worth through the SPHE programme. Pupils who engage in serious bullying behaviour may have counselling provided.

**Pupils** who observe incidents of bullying behaviour should be encouraged to discuss them with teachers.

**Other:** Class lessons will be taught, mainly in SPHE dealing with respect, self-esteem and the issue of bullying. Children will clearly be informed as to where they get help from – and assured that they may seek help from many sources – parents, teachers, friends, the wider school community and outside agencies.

**8. Bullying of School Personnel:** Bullying in any form (as described at section 3) of school personnel by pupils, their parents / guardians or by colleagues, by means of physical assault, damage to property, verbal abuse, threats to their families or any form of intimidation will not be accepted, will be investigated and will be acted upon. ( see **Health and Safety statement for details of procedures**)

## **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. Communication

This policy has been made available to school personnel, the Parents' Association, published on the school website, and is readily accessible to parents and pupils on request. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and Patron if requested.

## 12. Implementation

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.

Following formulation in consultation with school staff, and the Parents' Association this policy was adopted by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_ 2014

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal)

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date of next review: \_\_\_\_\_

## Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation. The following checklist must be used for this purpose. *The checklist is an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. In order to complete the checklist, an examination and review involving both quantitative and qualitative analysis, as appropriate across the various elements of the implementation of the school's anti-bullying policy will be required.*

	Yes /No
Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools</i> ?	
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 \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

To: \_\_\_\_\_

The Board of Management of \_\_\_\_\_ 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*.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Principa

Date \_\_\_\_\_

# Formal Record and report sheet of bullying incident and 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

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

Pupil concerned	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

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

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other	

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

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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 related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

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9. Details of actions taken

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Signed \_\_\_\_\_ (Teacher / school personnel) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal \_\_\_\_\_

\* **Note:** The categories listed in the tables 3, 4 & 6 are suggested and schools may add to or amend these to suit their own circumstances.