

**Anti-
Bullying
Policy
September
2020**

Whitechurch National School

Whitechurch Road, Rathfarnham, Dublin 16 Ireland

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Chairperson

Rev. Canon A. H. McKinley

Principal

Ms. Sarah Richards

Deputy Principal

Ms. Judy Brown

Whitechurch National School Anti-Bullying Policy

1. Full Compliance

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the Code of Behaviour Guidelines issued by the National Educational Welfare Board, the Board of Management of Whitechurch 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 (Circular 045/2013).

2. Aims of Policy

- to raise awareness of the seriousness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour, and the school's 'zero tolerance' of such behaviour.
- to create a community ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour, working with parents where this is necessary and desirable.
- to outline procedures to be used in preventing bullying behaviour in this school.
- to outline procedures to be used in reporting, investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour in this school.
- to outline strategies that may be usefully employed in working with children who are or have been involved in bullying behaviour.
- to outline the school's position on cyber-bullying.

3. Key Principles of Best Practice

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.
- 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.
 - 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).
- (i) On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy.

4. Definition and Types of Bullying Behaviour

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
- 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 shall be dealt with, 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.

It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone to menace, harass or offend another person. For more details please see our mobile phone policy.

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

A further list of examples of bullying behaviours is set out in Appendix 1.

5. Indicators of Bullying Behaviour

Indicators which may suggest a pupil is being bullied

- **Physical Indicators:**
 - unexplained bruising, cuts etc.
 - loss of/damage to personal property
 - hunger or thirst
 - frequent minor illnesses, headaches, tummy aches
 - bedwetting
 - loss of appetite
 - obsessive behaviour, physical appearance, weight gain
 - stammering
 - requests for extra money
- **Emotional/Psychological Indicators**
 - outbursts of anger, temper, irritability at home
 - bullying brother and sisters, parents
 - well behaved child suddenly troublesome**Signs of depression**
 - changes in mood, appetite, sleep pattern
 - tiredness, neglect of appearance
 - expressions of sadness, worthlessness
 - nightmares, crying at night
 - restless, dangerous, wild, disruptive behaviour
 - cynicism, black mood
 - implied or overt threats of suicide
- **School Related Indicators**
 - reluctance to go, wanting to be accompanied
 - returning in bad form
 - changing route
 - avoiding certain days/lessons
 - nervousness in class
 - punctuality problems
 - poor concentration
 - deterioration in school work
 - expressions of hopelessness
 - fewer phone calls, friends calling, invitations
 - reluctance to take part in activities
 - abusive phone calls, texts, email

Parents are strongly encouraged to contact the class teacher/Principal if they suspect or know of any incident of bullying behaviour involving their child (children) or any other child (children) in the school.

6. Relevant Teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying

The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying behaviour are as follows:

- The class teacher(s) of those pupils involved in the incident(s).
- The Principal or Deputy Principal

- Other members of staff as appropriate eg. a Special Education Teacher or Special Needs Assistant may need to become involved where a programme of extra support is needed for those children involved in incidents of bullying behaviour.

Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

7. Action Plan to Review our Anti-Bullying Policy

The following action plan outlines the steps taken to review our school's Anti-Bullying Policy:

Whitechurch National School Action Plan

- (1) Revise Anti-Bullying Policy created in June 2013
- (2) Deputy Principal attended "Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary School Workshop in February 2014
- (3) Principal attended further workshops as part of the following:
 - C.I.P.S.M.A. Conference in March 2014
 - Misneach Leadership Development Programme in March 2014
 - I.N.T.O. Principal's and Deputy Principals' Committee Meeting in March 2014
- (4) Staff reviewed new Department of Education and Skills Anti-Bullying Policy template
- (5) Preparation of draft policy by Principal and Deputy Principal
- (6) Parent Teacher Association hosted Parent Information Evening in March 2014 with speaker Sheila O'Malley-'How to Bully Proof Your Child'
- (7) Discussed of main points of draft policy with pupils in the senior classes
- (8) Parent Teacher Association reviewed draft policy in March 2014
- (9) Staff reviewed draft policy at staff meeting in April 2014
- (10) Principal and Deputy Principal reviewed the recommendations made by the staff, pupils and parents in April 2014
- (11) Parents voted their approval of final draft in May 2014
- (12) Board of Management approved final draft on 6th May 2014
- (13) Staff to review policy on Tuesday 15th 2014 September during Croke Park Session
- (14) Board of Management review policy September 2015 and annual review by staff and Board of Management planned thereafter.
- (15) Annual training for staff on Anti Bullying Procedures to take place in September.

8. 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:

- (a) Parents are requested and actively encouraged to make their children aware of the unacceptability of bullying behaviour, and encourage them to report such behaviour to their teachers in school, or the staff of organisations to which they belong, whenever they witness it.
- (b) In our school, children and their parents will be made aware of the unacceptability of bullying behaviour, and are encouraged by the staff to report such behaviour to staff whenever they witness it. Reporting bullying behaviour is NOT telling tales (which is motivated by the wish to get someone in trouble), but IS acting responsibly

(as it is motivated by the wish to help someone who is being physically or emotionally hurt).

(c) The Board of Management and staff are fully committed to the implementation of this Anti-Bullying Policy and its attendant strategies. They will, when appropriate, take the opportunity to promote our anti-bullying motto (STOP- Start Telling Other People and Several Times on Purpose) and have specific lessons on bullying behaviour and the importance of telling. The school uses the Stay Safe and Web Wise Programmes as part of the overall S.P.H.E. Plan (Please see the School Plan).

(d) Anti-Bullying Weeks are held in the school to promote the issues surrounding bullying and to highlight the emphasis our school places on creating a school culture that is against bullying. As part of the school's Anti-Bullying Week guest speakers are invited to give the pupils, teachers, and parents talks and training on issues around bullying. Special whole school assemblies are held on the topic of bullying. Whole school co-ordinated lessons and activities on the topic of bullying are also undertaken.

(e) Our school specifically considers the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to anti-bullying programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately eg. Zones of Regulation and Behaviour Support Plans.

(f) The following school policies also play a role in the implementation of education and prevention strategies within our school – Code of Behaviour, Child Protection Policy, Acceptable User Policy, and the Mobile Phone Policy.

Bullying may happen outside of school hours (8.10 a.m.-2.00 p.m.), school grounds and property, and the role that this school can play in combating such behaviours is limited. However, this school acknowledges that it may assist as follows:

(a) This school restricts the use of mobile telephones and internet access. These actions in themselves constitute a preventative measure against cyber-bullying in our school.

(b) This school strongly encourages parents to make sure that they and their children are aware of the risks of technology use, and that they know what to do if their child is cyber-bullied. This school also advises that parental control software for their children's mobile telephones and home computers should be considered.

(c) Teachers are required to teach the Web Wise programme each September to inform/remind the pupils about cyber safety (1st Class onwards).

(d) Should such cases occur, this school will work with the Gardaí and other support agencies in dealing with serious incidents of cyber-bullying.

9. Procedures for Reporting and Investigating Incidents of Bullying Behaviour

The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as practicable, the relationship of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame). Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parents/guardians) understand this approach from the outset.

The school's procedure for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by our school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:

- 1) Any pupil or parent/guardian may bring a bullying incident to the attention of any teacher in the school. Reports of bullying behaviour must include details so that an appropriate investigation can take place. Heresay and rumours are very difficult to deal with and the school will insist that any parents reporting incidents provide

facts and follow our procedures for reporting bullying incidents. The school will not accept parents reporting an incident and then requesting that the school not investigate. The school has a duty of care towards its pupils and will always investigate any reported incidents of bullying.

- 2) All alleged incidents of bullying behaviour will be investigated.
- 3) It is recognised that there can be considerable peer pressure against reporting bullying. Hence, all incidents of bullying behaviour will be investigated in a manner which will, as far as is practically possible, respect the privacy, anonymity, sensitivities and dignities of the child or children involved (as either target(s) or perpetrator(s)).
- 4) The teacher will inform the principal as soon as possible that there has been an allegation of bullying behaviour within the school.
- 5) The child will be reassured that his/her allegations will be taken seriously and investigated thoroughly and be acted upon as soon as possible.
- 6) The relevant teacher will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
- 7) The child who has allegedly been bullied and the child who is alleged to have been engaged in bullying behaviour will be given an opportunity to speak separately with the teacher/ principal to give their version of events. Both parties will be asked to complete the Report of Alleged Incident of Bullying Behaviour Form (see Appendix 2). Where considered appropriate, a teacher may scribe for a child who is too young or distressed to write down the details themselves.
- 8) If a group is involved, each member shall, if possible, be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved shall be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member shall 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 the group shall be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher.
- 9) It may be useful for the teacher to ask each child in the class to write down any undesirable behaviour which they may have witnessed in relation to the alleged bullying incident. This allows the teacher to draw up a clearer picture of what exactly has occurred.
- 10) In investigating and dealing with bullying, the relevant teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying behaviour has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
- 11) Once the teacher/principal is satisfied that bullying behaviour has occurred, the relevant teacher must complete a Record of Bullying Behaviour Form (see Appendix 3).
- 12) These children will be encouraged to understand the impact that their behaviour has had on the child who was bullied, and to try and see the situation from his/her point of view.
- 13) They may also be required to complete a Behaviour Reflection Form and a Behavioural Agreement Document (See Appendix 4).
- 14) The disciplinary sanction and the reasons for giving it will be explained clearly to the child/children who have engaged in the bullying behaviour and to the class, if necessary.
- 15) The parent(s)/guardian(s) of the parties involved will be contacted and the actions being taken and the reasons for them will be explained to them. Ways in which they can reinforce or support these actions will be discussed. The school's decision to issue a sanction to a child is final. It is important to implement the school's Code of Behaviour fully and consistently.

- 16) Parents/guardians 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 as quickly as possible.
- 17) Where deemed appropriate, parents of other pupils in the class where the bullying incident occurred, will be informed. All staff members will also be informed.
- 18) 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 parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school.

Follow up and Recording

(a) In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately 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) or the school Principal

(b) Follow-up interviews may be conducted with the parties involved, in order to review and evaluate progress.

(c) A written record of the bullying incident and the actions taken will be kept on file. This will be stored in a specified file in the locked filing cabinet in the school office.

(d) 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.

(e) In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school will advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children (Ombudsman for Children Act 2002).

10. Programme of Support

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.

If pupils require counselling or further supports, the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be for the pupil affected by the bullying or those involved in the bullying behaviour.

Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

11. 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.

12. 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 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.

13. Date this policy was adopted

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 6th May 2014.

14. Availability of this policy

This Anti-Bullying Policy should be:

- available to school personnel
- published on the school website (www.whitechurchns.ie)
- displayed on the school's notice board
- explained to all pupils annually, by their class teachers, in a language that they can understand
- available to parents (on request) and to the Parent Teacher Association

A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills and the Patron if requested.

15. Review 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, published on the school website, be readily accessible to parents on request and provided to the Parent Teacher Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department of Education and Skills.

Signed: _____ Signed: _____

Chairperson of Board of Management

Principal

Date: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 1

Examples of bullying behaviours

General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying	• Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc. • Physical aggression • Damage to property • Name calling • Slagging • The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person • Offensive graffiti • Extortion • Intimidation • Insulting or offensive gestures • The “look” • Invasion of personal space • A combination of any of the types listed.
Cyber	• Denigration: Spreading rumors, lies or gossip to hurt a person’s reputation • Harassment: Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual • Impersonation: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person’s name • Flaming: Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight • Trickery: Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online • Outing: Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images • Exclusion: Purposefully excluding someone from an online group • Cyber stalking: Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety • Silent telephone/mobile phone call • Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls • Abusive text messages • Abusive email • Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/ Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles • Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures • Abusive posts on any form of communication technology

Identity Based Behaviours

Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).

Homophobic and Transgender	•Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation •Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation •Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian...used in a derogatory manner •Physical intimidation or attacks •Threats
Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community	•Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background •Exclusion on the basis of any of the above
Relational	This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include: •Malicious gossip •Isolation & exclusion •Ignoring •Excluding from the group •Taking someone's friends away •“Bitching” •Spreading rumours •Breaking confidence •Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear •The “look” •Use or terminology such as ‘nerd’ in a derogatory way
Sexual	•Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching •Harassment
Special Educational Needs, Disability	• Name calling • Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs • Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying • Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues. • Mimicking a person's disability • Setting others up for ridicule

Appendix 2

REPORT OF ALLEGED INCIDENT OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

PART ONE – TO BE FILLED IN BY THE MEMBER OF STAFF

Date and time that the incident was reported: -----

Pupil's Name: -----

Member of staff's name: -----

Signature of reporting member of staff: -----

PART TWO – TO BE FILLED IN BY THE PUPIL OR HIS / HER PARENT

(Please indicate what happened, where and when it happened and who was involved)

All of the above is true to the best of my knowledge.

Signature of pupil: -----

PART THREE – TO BE FILLED IN AT THE OFFICE

Signature(s) of parent(s) / guardian(s) (if applicable): -----

Signature of Principal/Deputy Principal: ----- Date:-----

Appendix 3 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))

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

Pupil Concerned		Playground	
Other Pupil		Classroom	
Parent		Corridor	
Teacher		Toilets	
Other		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	
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 _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date _____

Date submitted to Principal _____

Appendix 4

BEHAVIOURAL AGREEMENT DOCUMENT

Date and time of meeting: -----

I, (insert name) ----- agree to keep to the following codes of behaviour:

1 - -----

2 - -----

3 - -----

4 - -----

5 - -----

Signature: -----

I understand that failure to comply with the above behaviour will result in the following immediate consequences (please refer to the Code of Behaviour) These consequences are:

1 - -----

2 - -----

3 - -----

Signature: -----

I understand that I may be required to attend a follow-up meeting. The purpose of the follow-up meeting will be to review my progress

Pupils Signature: -----

This agreement was made in the presence of:

Signature of interviewing member of staff: -----

Signature(s) of parent(s) / guardian(s) (if applicable): -----

Signature of relevant teacher/Principal -----

Appendix 5 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 Parent Teacher 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 _____