

Anti-Bullying Policy

Introduction

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB (National Education Welfare Board-*NOW TÚSLA*), the Board of Management of Fuerty N.S. 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.

This policy outlines what bullying is and the procedures followed in Fuerty N.S. to address incidents of bullying. Bullying is neither an inevitable part of school life, nor a necessary part of growing up and it rarely sorts itself out without intervention. Bullying can affect everyone, not just the bullies and the victims. It can also affect other children who watch; some pupils can be drawn-in by group pressure. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed, will a child best be able to benefit from the opportunities available in school.

Rationale

Here at Fuerty N.S., we believe that our pupils have the right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment. All institutions, whether large or small, contain some individuals who have the potential for bullying behaviour.

Fuerty N.S. has a clear ethos on the promotion of good citizenship and it is made clear that bullying is a form of anti-social behaviour. It is always wrong and will not be tolerated.

It is important therefore, that the school has a clear written policy to promote this belief, where both pupils and parent/guardians are fully aware that any complaints of bullying will be dealt with firmly, fairly and promptly.

Bullying can be prevented by ensuring that the school has a positive culture and climate that promotes respectful relationships across the school community.

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 certain 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, explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including 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.**

Aims of the Policy

- To foster a school ethos of mutual and self-respect
- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour
- To outline, promote and raise awareness of preventative approaches that can be used in response to reported incidences of bullying
- To develop a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour
- To outline procedures for noting and reporting instances of bullying behaviour
- To outline procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour

What is bullying?

In accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* bullying is defined as follows:

Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour - verbal, psychological or physical - conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time. Bullying behaviour is intentional and deliberate.

See below for examples of bullying behaviours.

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.

Bullying can take different forms. Examples include:

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

Physical aggression: This behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While pupils often engage in 'mess fights', they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.

Intimidation: Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation: it may be based on the use of very aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon. Particularly upsetting can be a facial expression which conveys 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 in public places, by passing around notes about or drawings of the pupil or by whispering insults about them 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. One of the most common forms 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 type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies 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 or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying. As cyber-bullying uses technology to perpetrate bullying behaviour and 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 name calling of this type 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 tends to operate at two extremes. There are those who are singled out for attention because they are perceived to be weak academically. At the other extreme there are 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 other property. 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.

Extortion: Demands for money may be made, often accompanied by threats (sometimes carried out in the event of the targeted pupil not delivering on the demand). A pupil may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to another who is engaged in bullying behaviour.

This list is not exhaustive and other forms of repeated, negative behaviour can be defined as bullying.

Advice for pupils

- Remember that your silence is the bully's greatest weapon.
- Tell yourself that you do not deserve to be bullied and that it is wrong.
- Be proud of who you are. It is good to be an individual.
- Try not to show that you are upset. It is hard but a bully thrives on someone's fear.
- Stay with a group of friends/people (unless the bullying is happening in that group) There is normally safety in numbers.
- Be assertive the follow the Stay Safe rules; **Say No, get away and tell someone you trust.**
- Talk to a teacher for advice and help or if at home, talk to your parents.
- Teachers will listen to you and in accordance with procedure, will endeavour to deal with the issue.
- Teachers will usually tell the Principal about the problem and together they will decide how to deal with it.

If you know someone is being bullied

- Take action. You might tell the bully to stop doing what they are doing. You might get some of your friends to help you with this.
- You could also make sure that the victim is not left alone until the problem is resolved. Watching and doing nothing looks as if you are on the side of the bully. It makes the victim feel more unhappy and on their own.
- If you feel you cannot get involved, tell an adult immediately. If you're at school, tell a teacher so that they can help, without getting you into trouble.
- Do not be, or pretend to be, friends with a bully.

Advice for parents

- Be aware of unusual behaviour in your children. For example, they may suddenly not wish to attend school, feel ill regularly, or not complete work to their normal standard.
- They may not want to invite certain children to play or go to activities they used to enjoy.
- Always take an active role in your child's education. Enquire how their day went, who they spend their time, with, how break time, was spent etc.
- If you feel your child may be a victim of bullying behaviour, inform the school immediately. It is very helpful for the school if you can list the 'who, where, when and how' of the behaviours affecting your child.
- Tell your child that there is nothing wrong with him/her. It is not his/her fault that he/she is being bullied.
- Always take an active role in your child's education by enquiring how they are getting on.
- If you have any concerns or feel that your child may be a victim of bullying behaviour, inform the school immediately.
- It is important to advise your child not to fight back. It can make matters worse.
- Tell your child there is nothing wrong with him /her. It is not their fault that they are being bullied.
- Make sure that your child is aware of the school policy concerning bullying and that they will not be afraid to ask for help.
- Make sure your child is fully aware of the school policy regarding bullying and that they should not be afraid to ask for help
- To speak to the class teacher if their child is being bullied or they suspect that this is happening.
- To speak to the class teacher as soon as they are aware that issues are arising which are affecting their child.

- To instruct their children to tell if they are being bullied or if they have seen other pupils being bullied.
- To notify the school if they think that their child is displaying bullying behaviour and to work with the school in addressing this problem. They should not defer letting the school know of any issue, in the hope that the problem will go away.
- To ensure that if their children are online that they are using social media in a safe and responsible manner; parental supervision is very important in this area as there are risks associated with internet/website access.
- To never directly approach a student, or the parent of a student, at the school to intervene in behavioural issues.

Advice for teachers

- Organise the school community in order to minimise opportunities for bullying; make sure that supervision is sufficient at all times.
- Use opportunities to discuss aspects of bullying and the appropriate way to behave towards each other. In this respect the SPHE (Social, Personal and Health Education) programme is very important and especially the Stay Safe lessons addressing bullying. The Stay Safe programme is implemented fully across the school.
- Regular communications where the school's Golden Rules are reiterated around treating other's in our school community with respect at all times.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours/outings.
- Deal quickly, firmly and fairly with any complaints, involving parents where necessary.
- Regularly review the school policy and procedures and assess its' success or otherwise.
- When buying teaching materials (books, posters, software, etc) ensure that nothing gives a negative view of any group because of their ethnic origin, gender, etc)
- Continue to have a firm and fair Code of Behaviour.
- Encourage pupils to discuss how they get on with other people and to form positive attitudes towards other people. This includes work on friendship and what it really means.
- Encourage pupils to treat everyone with care and respect.
- Treat bullying as a serious matter and take every possible action to prevent it happening in our school.
- Use and continue to update a variety of materials and resources available to assist us in devising appropriate anti-bullying programmes.

Actions to be taken when bullying is alleged

- The relevant class teacher and school principal have the responsibility for investigating bullying.
- If bullying is alleged or suspected we talk to the alleged victim, the alleged bully (or bullies) and any witnesses. This will include the taking of a written record of what happened, clarifying the 'who, where, when and how' of the incidents.
- Help and support will be given, as appropriate, to both the victims and the bully (bullies).

We support the victim in the following ways:

- By offering them an immediate opportunity to talk about the incidents with their class teacher, or another teacher if they choose.
- By informing the victim's parents/guardians.
- By offering continuing support when they feel they need it.
- By taking one or more of the disciplinary steps described below to prevent more bullying.
- We also impose sanctions as well as trying to help the bully (bullies) in the following ways:
- By talking about what happened to discover why they became involved, the extent of their involvement and their understanding of their own culpability.
- By informing the bully's (bullies') parent/guardians.
- By continuing to work with the bully (bullies) in order to challenge negative attitudes as far as possible.
- By implementing the following sanctions in order to prevent more bullying.

Sanctions as per 'Code of Behaviour'.

1. Reasoning with the child
2. Reprimand (including advice on how to improve)
3. Temporary separation from peers, friends and others
4. Loss of privileges
5. Prescribing additional work
6. Referral to Principal
7. Communication with parents**
8. Parents/Guardians may be requested to take student home early from school due to serious misbehaviour
9. Suspension (temporary)

The above list does not have to be followed in order.

**** Communication with parents, in the instance of bullying, will take place automatically through the class teacher and principal****

- Pupils will be warned officially to stop their bullying behaviour.
- In cases where it has been determined that serious bullying behaviour has occurred, the teacher and Principal will request a meeting with the parents or guardians of the two parties involved (separately). The purpose of the meeting is (a) to inform parents/guardians of the problem and (b) explain actions being taken and (c) the reasons for them. Their assistance will be sought in preventing a repeat of the behaviour.
- Separate follow-up meetings, with the two parties involved, may be arranged with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date, if the victim is ready and agreeable. This can have a therapeutic effect.
- Parents may be requested to escort their child to and from school.
- Repeated offending may result in suspension from school for a minor fixed period (one or two days).
- Continuing to offend, following the above measures, will result in a recommendation to the Board of Management for suspension for a major fixed period (up to three days).
- In instances of what is deemed as serious bullying, the school may seek assistance and advice from outside agencies, if necessary for Child Protection, including National Education Psychological Service, the National Educational Welfare Board (TUSLA), HSE (social services) and Juvenile Liaison Office. **Section 6.8.12-6.8.18, Anti Bullying procedures, 2013.**

- A record is kept, when appropriate, of all incidents of bullying and the subsequent investigation and disciplinary measures taken.

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 members of the school community 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.

This policy has been made available to school personnel and is published on the school website which is accessible to parents and pupils. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and the Patron if requested.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year, using Appendix 4 of Circ 045/2013.

This document states the Anti Bullying policy of our school at the present time. It may, however, be subject to adjustments and changes in the future. This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on

Date 2018

Signed Fr.Eugene McLoughlin

Appendix 1: Examples of bullying behaviours

- 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
- General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying**
- Offensive graffiti
 - Extortion
 - Intimidation
 - Insulting or offensive gestures
 - The “look”
 - Invasion of personal space
 - A combination of any of the types listed.
-
- **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
- Cyber**
- **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).

- Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation
- Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation
- Homophobic and Transgender**
 - Name calling used in a derogatory manner
 - Physical intimidation, attacks or 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

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"
- Relational**
 - 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

- 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
- Special Educational Needs, Disability**
 - 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

Template for recording bullying behaviour, known as Appendix 3.

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			School Bus		
			Other		

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

--

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

9. Details of actions taken

Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher) 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.