



## Anti-Bullying Policy

- In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the Code of Behaviour guidelines issued by the Tusla and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017, the Board of Management of O'Growney National School has adopted the following Anti-bullying Policy, within the framework of the school's overall Code of Behaviour & Excellence.**

**This policy fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* which were published in September 2013. It aims to produce a safe and caring environment in which all children can develop to their full potential.**

  - Every pupil has the right to enjoy his/her time in O'Growney National School, free from bullying.
  - Our school **will not tolerate** any unkind actions or remarks.
  - Our school Anti-Bullying Motto is "**Nice not Nasty**".
  - Pupils should report all instances of bullying. { "*Code of Behaviour Awareness Forms – Form 2*" are available throughout the school.

**Bullying in O' Growney National School is regarded as a very serious matter.**
- The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:**

  - a positive school culture and climate which is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
  - encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behavior in a non-threatening environment;
  - promotes 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 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.
  - effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
  - supports for staff;
  - consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies);
  - ongoing 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:

### Definition of Bullying

**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

It may manifest itself in many forms such as physical aggression, damage to property, extortion, intimidation, isolation, name-calling, writing notes, emailing, on social media or texting. As a form of aggressive behaviour it is usually hurtful and deliberate. It is persistent over time and makes it difficult for those being bullied to defend him/herself.

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 will be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour & Excellence Policy.

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 & Excellence".

*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: (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):**

All class teachers in O'Growney National School will investigate **all** allegations of bullying. These allegations will be investigated and procedures conducted as per this policy.

Each year we hold an Anti -Bullying fortnight, in which the teachers address all issues relating to bullying. This year the weeks {November 05<sup>th</sup> – November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2018} has been allocated to "**Anti Bullying Fortnight**". All children will complete "Code of Behaviour Awareness" Forms.

The investigation by the class teacher will be submitted to the Principal/Deputy Principal for further investigation.

3. **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 (see Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):**

The school staff will foster an atmosphere of friendship, respect and tolerance. Children's self-esteem will be developed through celebrating individual differences, achievements, acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour and manners and providing opportunities for success throughout the curriculum and school.

Teachers will help pupils to develop empathy by discussing feelings and trying to put themselves in the place of others. Teachers will be vigilant, responding sensitively and caringly to pupils who disclose incidence of bullying and investigating all disclosed incidents of bullying.

Relationships with pupils will be based on mutual respect and trust so that pupils will have confidence in the school staff.

An Anti-bullying information fortnight will take place annually in O'Growney National School. All children will be made aware of the definition, causes, identification and affects of Bullying. Children will be asked to fill in "Code of Behaviour Awareness" forms, followed by a more detailed form, if he/she deems to be bullied.

Teachers will discuss the school's anti-bullying policy with the pupils and use behavioural management strategies, which focus on problem solving and enable pupils to take an active role in finding a solution to problems. The formal curriculum of the school will also be used to educate all pupils against bullying behaviour. Anti-Bullying issues may be raised through the school religion programme "Grown in Love", the Social Personal and Health Education programme, the Stay Safe Programme, Walk Tall or the Visual Arts and Circle-time.

The relevant teacher will 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. These will be forwarded to the Principal/Deputy Principal for further investigation. All documentation will be filed away in a secure file, as per G.D.P.R/Data Protection guidelines.

**4. 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*):**

Throughout the year, "Code of Behaviour Awareness" forms, are available for children to complete, in school or at home. A referral box is available outside the Principal's office or the child can give the Code of Behaviour Awareness" form to the class teacher, at any time.

- 1). All incidents, no matter how trivial, will be investigated by the class teacher. {Form 1}
- 2). Further investigation will be conducted, if necessary. {Form 2}
- 3). Children will journal events on prescribed sheets – "Child's Incident Journal".
- 4). Teachers will keep a written record of all serious incidents of misbehaviour.

In any case where it has been determined by the relevant teacher/Principal/Deputy Principal, that bullying behaviour has occurred-

- 5). This behaviour will be recorded in the standardized recording template. (Appendix 3)
- 6). The parents of the parties involved will be contacted to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy);
- 7). Appropriate written records will assist the relevant teacher/Principal/Deputy Principal in his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

These procedures aim to investigate and deal with situations with a view to resolving any issues and restoring as far as is practical the relationships of the parties involved, rather than to apportion blame.

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

In the aftermath of an incident involving children in our school, we treat all involved with respect and all parties have an opportunity to explain what has happened in their own words, in a safe and non-threatening environment.

Pupils will have the process explained to them. They will be given the opportunity to discuss incidents that have taken place. It will be made clear that they can take the time necessary to explain what has happened and also that no sanctions will be applied at this time, but the time will come for consequences, sanctions and apologies as deemed necessary, when all the information has been gathered and reviewed.

It will also be made clear that pupils may write or draw pictures to help them articulate what has happened and how they are feeling. Pictures of emotions will be made available, if these are of benefit to the children involved. It will be acknowledged that feeling nervous, worried or angry are normal feelings. Strategies will be suggested to deal with this, at an age appropriate level, without having a negative impact on others. Self-esteem lessons will be undertaken to give all children concerned a confidence boost.

Time will be given to children individually to discuss what has happened, their involvement and feelings around what has happened.

There will be a discussion around what has happened, how things could have been handled better and to work through difficulties remaining or anything either parties are still unsure of or to clarify things, if necessary.

## Principal

The procedures include oversight arrangements which require that, *at least once in every school term*, the Principal will provide a report to the Board of Management setting out:

- the overall number of bullying cases reported (by means of the bullying recording template in Appendix 3) to the Principal or Deputy Principal since the previous report to the Board and;
- confirmation that all of these cases have been, or are being, dealt with in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy and the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools.

## Board of Management

The Board of Management is responsible for ensuring that all members of the school community are enabled to deal effectively with bullying. The Board is committed to providing time and resources for the implementation of this policy. The Board will ensure that proper supervisory and monitoring measures are in place to prevent bullying and to deal with incidents appropriately as they arise.

- As part of the oversight arrangements, the Board of Management will undertake “**An Annual Review**” of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation by the school. (Appendix 4)

### 6. 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.

### 7. 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.

8. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2019

9. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron, if requested.

10. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year.

**Policy ratified by the Board of Management on 1<sup>st</sup> February, 2019**