



Anti-Bullying Policy 2022 2023

1. 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.

2. The Board of Management and staff recognise 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); and
- 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:

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 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

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*):

The **'Relevant Teacher(s)'** for investigating and dealing with bullying in this school are the relevant class teachers and/or Principal / Deputy Principal.

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

5. 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*):

Creation of a culture of "telling".

- Teachers should repeatedly reinforce the message that if anyone is the victim of bullying behaviour they should tell an adult. Pupils should be reassured that if they tell, something will be done about the bullying in a safe manner and all reported incidents will be dealt with.
- Bystanders can be the key to resolving bullying and if anyone witnesses bullying behaviour, they should always tell a teacher. This is not telling tales but a means of protecting victims. This can be particularly relevant for ancillary staff and parents at collection times.

Raising the awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour by:

- Displaying the school's Anti-Bullying Slogan in prominent places around the school environment.
- Go over aspects of bullying annually with all classes. (What is bullying? What is not bullying? What to do if you feel you are being bullied? What to do if you see somebody else being bullied?)
- Engaging in formal teaching within the class setting through SPHE and RSE programme.
- Creating an annual awareness fortnight (The date for this fortnight 8th November – 19th November.) This will involve discussion, anti-bullying games, poster/slogan competitions, bullying surveys for classes 1st–6th etc. (this list is not exhaustive).
- Formal programmes of work are a vital element in raising children's self-esteem and equipping children to cope with bullying behaviour. The following resources are available and used in the school:
 - Walk Tall,
 - R.S.E. manual
 - Grow in Love,
 - Webwise.ie / myself.ie
 - Stay Safe,
 - Anti-bullying guidelines

Other strategies

- Positive reinforcement by teachers in classroom setting (Students of the week, Golden time, spot prizes, stars, stickers, recognition at assemblies, circle time etc.)
- Modelling of respectful behaviour and language by teachers and staff.
- Promotion of extra-curricular activities which encourage co-operation among pupils (to extend this beyond sport).
- Rewarding incidents of good and improved behaviour and showing acts of kindness at class level and whole-school through recognition and awards.
- Encouraging students to look out for each other and to be responsible for their own behaviour.
- All teachers are required to be vigilant on yard duty, record all incidences and monitor repeat offenders .
- Immediate verbal affirmation of children who report incidents of bullying they have witnessed.
- Each class to have a set of class rules which compliment the school's Code of Behaviour.
- Ensure supervision at all times when pupils can access the internet.

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*):

STAGE 1 - ESTABLISHING THE FACTS

All reports of suspected bullying must be dealt with initially by the relevant teacher.

- If the incident occurs on yard the witnessing staff member / or a child witness discusses the incident with the relevant class teacher.
- If a parent reports a bullying incident, the parent must speak to the relevant class teacher.
- When a pupil tells a teacher he/she is being bullied, it is important to gather all of the facts from both sides (What, where, when, who, why?). This will be done by the relevant teacher and may involve a small group or class survey.

STAGE 2 - INTERVIEWING AN ALLEGED PERPETRATOR

The relevant teacher should take a calm, unemotional problem solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour. He/ she should

- Investigate the incident outside the classroom situation where possible, to avoid public humiliation.
- Where possible, a witness is present.
- Any notes taken will be brief, factual and should be void of emotional, or judgmental language.
- Interview pupils who may be directly / indirectly involved seeking answers to questions of what, why, where, when and who.
- Interview pupils individually at first and thereafter all those involved should be met as a group.
- Sometimes it may be appropriate to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident/s.
- The relevant teacher will then exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.

At this stage, if it is deemed bullying, an "Incident Report Form" will be completed and a copy must be provided to the Principal / Deputy Principal.

The parents of both parties involved will be contacted to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken.

STAGE 3 - RESOLUTION

- An interview with the alleged bully using the Alleged Bullying Interview Sheet will be completed. (see forms in anti-bullying folder).
- It is explained to the alleged bully how hurtful their behaviour is and attempts are made to encourage them to empathise with the alleged victim.
- Depending on the severity of the incident parents may be required to become involved or they may wish to be involved.
- Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigations 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.

➤ Information spoken about should not become available, so that the victim would be further tormented. (i.e. need to know basis)

Recording of incidents

➤ While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher will use his/her professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same;

➤ If incidences have not been resolved within the 20 school Days, the incident will be recorded on the recording template as in Appendix 3 (Anti bullying Procedures for Primary and Post - Primary Schools). This template will be completed in full and a copy given to the Deputy Principal and Principal. At every Board meeting the Principal will provide a report to the BOM setting out the overall number of bullying cases reported by means of this template and confirmation that all cases are being dealt with in accordance with procedure.

7. 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*):

Responding to Bullying

Support will be provided for anyone who is bullied by offering them an immediate opportunity to talk about their experience with their teacher or other teacher, along with continuing support when they feel they may need it. A victim will be assured that the school community will help them and put monitoring procedures in place to safeguard them.

Help and support will be sought for a child involved in bullying behaviour. This will include speaking with them to discover why they became involved, informing their parents/guardians and continuing to work with them in order to modify their behaviour.

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).

8. Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

9. Prevention of Harassment

The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of pupils or staff or the harassment of pupils or staff on any of the nine grounds specified i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

- 10.** This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on **Wednesday 5th October 2022**
- 11.** This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and is readily accessible to parents and pupils on request. It has been provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron, if requested.
- 12.** 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 will be readily accessible to parents and pupils on request. The policy will be 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.

This policy will be monitored and reviewed annually by the Board of Management.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on 5th October, 2022

Signed on behalf of the Board of Management:

Signed: *Fr. Patrick Mc Mahon*
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: **5th October, 2022**

Signed: *John Brennan*
Principal

Date: **5th October, 2022**

Date of next review: September / October 2023