# Ard Rí Community National School

Balreask Old,
Navan,
Co. Meath

Roll No. 20352T

# Anti-Bullying Policy

**October 2018**

# Anti-Bullying Policy

## Foreword

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the Code of Behaviour guidelines issued by the National Education and Welfare Board (NEWB), School Manager, parents and the staff of Ard Rí Community NS have 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.

## Rationale

This policy outlines what bullying is and the procedures followed in Ard Rí Community NS 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 those 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.

Here at Ard Rí Community NS 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. If a school is well disciplined and organised it can minimise the occurrences of bullying. Ard Rí Community NS 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 parents/guardians are fully aware that any complaints of bullying will be dealt with firmly, fairly and promptly.

This Anti- Bullying Policy is interlinked with all school child welfare policies. This policy does not stand alone.

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 behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
  - 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 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

## 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, which is conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and <u>which is repeated over time.</u>

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 as identified under the 9 grounds of discrimination (Equality Status Act 2000).

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. It can be:

1. **Physical:**
   A child can be physically hit, punched, kicked, pushed, spat at etc.
2. **Verbal:**
   Verbal abuse can take the form of name calling. It may be directed towards gender, ethnic origin, religious belief, physical/social disability, attributes or personality etc. Verbal bullying is not limited to name calling.
3. **Exclusion:**
   A child can be bullied by being deliberately excluded from discussions/activities, by classmates or those they believe to be their friends
4. **Damage to property or theft:**
   Children may have their property damaged or stolen.
5. **Cyber:**
   A child may be subject to cyber bullying if he/she is the victim of a once-off or repeated offensive/hurtful text message, private or public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum, as outlined above.

## What can you do if you are being bullied?

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.
- If you cannot get away shout for help.
- Be assertive and 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/ guardian/ trusted adult.
- Write a note (anonymously if you wish) and post it into the STAR box at school.
- Teachers will listen to you and in accordance with procedure, will endeavour to deal with the issue. Teachers will inform the Designated Liaison Person (DLP)/ Deputy Designated Liaison Person (DDLP) about the bullying behaviour 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.
- Write a note (anonymously if you wish) and post it into the STAR box at school.
- If you feel you cannot get involved, tell an adult immediately. If you're at school tell a teacher so they can help, without getting you into trouble.
- Do not pretend to be friends with a bully.

## As a parent

- Be aware of unusual behaviour in your children. For example, they may suddenly not wish to attend school, start acting out at home, 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 keep a written account of the 'who, where, when and how' of the behaviours affecting your child.
- It is important that you advise your child not to fight back. It can make matters worse.
- Tell your child that there is nothing wrong with her/him; it is not her/his fault that they are being bullied.
- Make sure your child is fully aware of the school policy regarding bullying and that they should not be afraid to ask for help or post their concerns into the STAR box.

## As a school

- Organise the 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 ways 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.
- 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 discipline structure.
- 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. Include workshops on bullying issues from outside agencies.
- Any incidences of bullying behavior will be recorded on the school report form – See appendix 1

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

**Class based incidences: Class Teacher**

**Junior & Senior Infants:** Naomi Keogh
**Junior and Senior Infants:** Tara Power
**First Class:** Rachel Condon
**Second Class:** Niamh Donnachie
**Second & Third Class**: Cailín Mc Donagh
**Fourth Class**: Karen Dunne
**Fifth Class:** Edel Barry
**Sixth Class:** Jack Scannell

**Inter class incidences:** Emer Kavanagh (Deputy Principal)

**Whole school community/ Parent body:** Darragh Roe (Principal)

## The education and prevention strategies that will be used by the school are as follows-

We understand the complexity of bullying behavior. No one intervention works in all situations. As a staff we will be committed to reviewing how we deal with bullying and ensure best practice is in place.

- The message that bullying is never acceptable, that it is wrong, that it is not a normal part of growing up will be upheld by the staff at all times whether dealing with children or parents.
- The child friendly motto 'Kind hands, kind feet, kind words' will be displayed throughout the school. It will be referred to regularly. Children who break the code (whether bullying or in a once off discipline issue) will be asked to quote the motto as part of an apology etc.
- All staff will work hard to promote a culture where children are encouraged to disclose and discuss incidences of bullying behavior.
- Staff will catch children being good and reward and emphasise positive behavior.
- There will be at least three members of staff supervising on yard at all times. Children should be in view of staff at all times.
- The teachers will ensure that school Code of Behaviour is reinforced and upheld on a daily basis.
- A school wide anti-bullying poster competition will be run annually with the winning art-work being displayed on the notice boards throughout the school.
- SPHE programmes to be followed are

The Walk Tall Programme: The Walk Tall Programme aims to give primary school children the confidence, skills and knowledge to, make healthy choices.

The Relationships and Sexuality Education Programme: The Relationships and Sexuality Education Programme aims to enable the child to feel confident and comfortable with his/her sexuality and that of others.

The Stay Safe Programme: The Stay Safe Programme aims to teach children about the importance of telling.

- Suitable and safe apps have been downloaded for school devices. Internet access will be closely monitored.
- The Goodness Me Goodness You Programme.

The Goodness Me Goodness You Programme: Of central concern to Goodness Me Goodness You is the life of the child. It explores the child's life, their relationship with others and with the wider world. This programme contributes greatly to the establishment of a positive attitude among children and members of the wider school community. It promotes a culture that is positive and welcoming of difference and diversity. It promotes a culture based on inclusivity.

## Actions to be taken when bullying is alleged and/or witnessed

If bullying is reported staff will follow these procedures:

- 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 (template for recording bullying behavior attached), clarifying the 'who, where, when and how' of the incidents. The written report will be kept in a file in the locked filing cabinet.
- If bullying behavior is reported to a teacher other than the relevant teacher the relevant teacher must be notified as soon as possible. It will be decided and documented whether the teacher who received the report or the relevant teacher will monitor the case.
- Help and support will be given, as appropriate, to both the victims and the bully (bullies).
- All members of staff will be made aware of instances of bullying. Staff will be highly vigilant for further instances.
- Staff should intervene immediately upon witnessing an instance of bullying. The disciplinary steps below should be followed.
- Further instances will be recorded on paper and added to the file.
- All instances of bullying will be reported at management meeting level and documented in the minutes of management meetings.

We support the victim in the following ways:

- By offering them an immediate opportunity to talk about the incidents with the relevant teacher, or another teacher if they choose.
- By informing the victim's parents/guardians.
- By offering continuing support when they feel they need it.
- While staff supervising on yard will always be vigilant, all staff will be informed of every case of bullying and specific observation will be placed on interactions between the involved parties.

- By taking one or more of the disciplinary steps described below to prevent more bullying.

We also discipline, yet try 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') parents/guardians.
- By continuing to work with the bully (bullies) in order to challenge negative attitudes as far as possible.
- By taking one or more of the disciplinary steps described below to prevent more bullying.

## Disciplinary steps

- Pupils will be warned officially to stop their bullying behaviour.
- In cases where it has been determined that 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 (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 children involved, may be arranged, with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date, if the victim is ready and agreeable. An apology can be verbal or written as decided on a case by case basis.
- Loss of specific privileges as appropriate. These will be discussed with the parents/guardians before implementation and can include the following:
    - Immediate 'Time Out' if caught in the act of bullying.
    - Exclusion from break/lunch times for a specific number of days.
    - 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 ~~School Manager~~ Chairperson of Board of Management for suspension for a major fixed period (up to three days)

The school may seek assistance and advice from outside agencies if necessary, including National Educational Psychological Service, the National Educational Welfare Board, HSE (social services) and Juvenile Liaison Office.

A record is kept of all incidents of bullying and the subsequent investigation and disciplinary measures taken. All records will be kept in a file in a locked filing cabinet.

## Programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying

According to the Action Plan on Bullying report the impacts of bullying on a person are *"Loss of self-esteem, anxiety, stress, depression, difficulties with school work, reluctance to attend school, and in extreme cases self-harm and suicide"*

- Reported incidents of bullying will be discussed as an agenda issue at all staff meetings and all management meetings until a time when all parties are sure that the bullying has ceased.
- Bullying is not a problem schools can solve alone. Parents of the victim and the children who carry out the bullying will be consulted regularly. Strong home school links will be established.
- Every opportunity will be taken to build up a victim's self-esteem, give position of responsibility, reward for strengths, public praise etc.

## 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.

## 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.

## Monitoring/ Evaluation/ Review

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 02.10.2018

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

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.

Signed: _____ (Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _____ (Principal)

Date: 2 OCT. 2018.

Date of next review: 2018 - 2019

**Appendix 1:**

**Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour**

1. Name of pupil being bullied and the 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 (tick all that apply)

| | |
|---|---|
| Pupil concerned | |
| Other Pupil | |
| Parent | |
| Teacher | |
| Other | |

4. Location of incidents (tick all that apply)

| | |
|---|---|
| Playground | |
| Classroom | |
| Corridor | |
| Toilets | |
| Other | |

5. Name of person who reported the bullying concern_____

6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (Tick all that apply)

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Physical Agression | | Cyber-Bullying | |
| Damage to property | | Intimidation | |
| Isolation/ Exclusion | | Malicious Gossip | |
| Name Calling | | Other (Please Specify) | |

7. Brief description of bullying behaviour and its impact

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|---|
| |

8. Details of actions taken

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|---|
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Signed _____(Relevant Teacher) Date submitted to DLP/ DDLP _____