

Christ Church National School

Anti-Bullying Policy

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the *Code of Behaviour Guidelines* issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of Christ Church 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.
2. 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.
 - Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
 - Supports to 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 Procedure 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,**
- **Cyberbullying 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.

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. Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

All alleged incidents of bullying behaviour will be investigated by the class teacher.

- a) It should be recognised that there can be considerable peer pressure against reporting bullying. Hence, all incidents of bullying behaviour should 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))
- b) In many cases, it will also be helpful to talk to the parents of the parties involved and witnesses to the bullying behaviour.
- c) In the investigation of incidents of bullying behaviour, investigators should communicate *acceptance* of what the person says, and listen actively, recording specific grievances (esp. re. concrete events)
- d) A standardised *reporting* form may be used in the recording and investigation of incidents of bullying behaviour (see Appendix 1)
- e) All reports of incidents of bullying behaviour must be given to the Principal.

The Principal/Deputy Principal may participate in any investigation or dealings with alleged incidents of bullying behaviour.

5. Education and Prevention Strategies

Once off incidences of bad behaviour should be reported to the class teacher by pupil or parent see Appendix 2, Anti-Bullying Awareness – Incident Report Form. The purpose of this is to create an awareness of the impact of pupil's behaviour on others thereby creating an understanding of the feelings of others and to nip bad behaviour in the bud.

- 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 into 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. The staff will teach specific lessons re. bullying behaviour.
- d) The Stay Safe Programme is taught to all classes annually
- e) Stay Safe is taught to pupils with SEN explicitly.
- f) Further education is provided as part of the Social Personal & Health Education programme e.g. Walk Tall and R.S.E.
- g) 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.

- h) 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 being cyber-bullied. This school also advises that parental control software for their children's mobile telephones and home computers should be considered.
- i) The Webwise programme is taught in the first term to inform/remind the pupils about cyber safety.
- j) Should such cases occur, this school will work with Gardaí and other support agencies in dealing with serious incidents of cyber-bullying.
- k) An Anti-Bullying Awareness Week is held annually.

6. Procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying

Class Teachers are responsible for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour as outlined in Section 4. The Principal/Deputy Principal may be involved at any/all stages.

- i) The primary aim for the class teacher in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame);
- ii) In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
- iii) All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the class teacher. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling-tales but are behaving responsibly;
- iv) Non-teaching staff (e.g. secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers, cleaners) are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the class teacher;
- v) Parents 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 involved as quickly as possible;
- vi) It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset;
- vii) Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents;
- viii) Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
- ix) All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way;
- x) When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the class teacher should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner;
- xi) If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements;
- xii) Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher
- xiii) It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s);
- xiv) In cases where it has been determined by the class teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy). The school should give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils;

- xv) Where the class teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;
- xvi) It must 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 parents and the school;
- xvii) Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable. This can have a therapeutic effect;
- xviii) In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and approximately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded by the relevant teacher in the recording template see Appendix 1
- xix) In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the class teacher must, 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; and
 - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal;
- xx) Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures;
- xxi) In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows

- a. If it is, following the procedures outlined in Section 4, above, concluded that a pupil has been involved as a perpetrator of bullying behaviour, the perpetrator of the bullying behaviour should be encouraged to understand the impact that his/her behaviour has had on the target, and to try and see the situation from his/her point of view.
- b. In cases where bullying behaviour has occurred, teachers will meet with the parents of the parties involved as appropriate, and will explain the actions being taken and the reasons for them. Ways in which they can reinforce or support these actions will be discussed.
- c. Where deemed appropriate, sanctions against those who have perpetrated bullying behaviour will be made.
- d. Standardised *Behavioural Agreements* may be used in dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour (See Appendix 3).
- e. Follow-up interviews may be conducted with the parties involved, in order to review and evaluate progress.

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 reasonable and 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, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Travelling community.

10.This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____ -

11.This policy is available in the school office. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills and the patron if requested.

12.This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management annually. 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: _____
(Chairperson of the Board of Management)

Signed: _____
(Principal)

Date: _____

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____

DRAFT

Appendix 1

Template for recording bullying behaviour

1. Name of pupil bullied and class group

Name _____ Class _____

2. Name(s) and class(es) engaged in bullying behaviour

3. Source of bullying concern/report box(es))*

Pupil concerned	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

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

(tick relevant

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	
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 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 school may add to or amend these to suit their own circumstances.

Incident Report Form

Class: _____

[Faint, large, diagonal watermark text reading "DRAFT" is visible across the page.]

Date: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 3 **Christ Church National School**

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. 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 managing member of staff: -----