



Presentation Primary School

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Anti-Bullying Policy

1. INTRODUCTION

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 Presentation Primary 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. RATIONALE

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 (See Appendix 1) 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; involves collaboration among and between staff & pupils and promotes respectful relationships across the school community; encourages the work of the student council in this area
- 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 ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

3. DEFINITION OF BULLYING

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

'Unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conduct, 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.

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. RESPONSIBILITY FOR INVESTIGATION, FOLLOW UP AND RECORDING OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:

- The class teacher(s) initially
- The principal thereafter if necessary

5. EDUCATION AND PREVENTION STRATEGIES

The following education and prevention strategies, at the appropriate and relevant level for each class, will be used by the school:

- Prevention and awareness raising measures across all aspects of bullying and involves strategies to engage pupils in addressing problems when they arise. In particular, such strategies need to build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils. This will be done through the Student Council, weekly school assembly, liaising with the school well-being committee and initiatives such as kindness week, friendship week etc.
- Prevention and awareness raising measures focusing on cyber-bullying by educating pupils on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while online. The school will provide training for parents, pupils and staff by an outside company.
- Teachers can influence attitudes to bullying behaviour in a positive manner. Each staff member is aware of the importance of being a role model for behaviour throughout the school.
- There are a number of curriculum components and programmes which are particularly relevant to the prevention of bullying and the promotion of respect for diversity and inclusiveness. The SPHE curriculum makes specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the inter-related areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships. The Stay Safe & RSE programmes at primary level are

personal safety skills programmes which seek to enhance children's self-protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying. Each class will also use the Walk tall programme once a year. The NEPS Friends for Life Programme is accessible to the school and a number of staff members are trained in the administration of this programme

- The work could be extended into many other areas such as Art, Drama, Religious Education, and Physical Education. Co-operation and group enterprise can be promoted through team sports, school clubs and societies as well as through practical subjects

6. PROCEDURES FOR INVESTIGATION, RECORDING OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR FOLLOW-UP

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:

The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame). With this in mind the procedures are as follows:

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher(s) will exercise his/her/their professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred, what type if it has and how best the situation might be resolved
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher(s). 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
- Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers, cleaners must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher
- Parents and pupils are required to cooperate 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
- It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents
- Initial investigations of bullying will be done in class where possible but some incidents might be best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved
- 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
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher(s) 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
- If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at 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
- 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

- Where the relevant teacher(s) has/have 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
- It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s)
- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher(s) 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. 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
- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to them how they are in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get them to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied
- 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;
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved may 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
- In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after they have determined that bullying has occurred, it must be recorded by the relevant teacher in the recording template at Appendix 3
- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of their 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 and any feedback from the parties involved, their parents or the Principal/Deputy Principal
- Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures
- 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.

Procedures for recording bullying behaviour

The Board of Management has clear procedures for the formal noting and reporting of bullying behaviour. All records must be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are set out at the following:

- (i) 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

(ii) If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must 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.

(iii) The relevant teacher must use the recording template at Appendix 3 in the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools which were published in September 2013 to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

a) in cases where he/she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred; and

b) where the school has decided as part of its anti-bullying policy that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable

In each of the circumstances at (a) and (b) above, the recording template at Appendix 3 in the procedures must be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable. It should also be noted that the timeline for recording bullying behaviour in the recording template at Appendix 3 does not in any way preclude the relevant teacher from consulting the Principal or Deputy Principal at an earlier stage in relation to a case.

Bullying as part of a continuum of behaviour

It is also important to note that bullying behaviour can be part of a continuum of behaviour rather than a stand-alone issue and in some cases, behaviour may escalate beyond that which can be described as bullying to serious physical or sexual assault or harassment. To ensure that any such cases are dealt with appropriately, the school's anti-bullying policy has provided for appropriate linkages with the overall code of behaviour and provide for referral to be made to relevant external agencies and authorities where appropriate. In cases where a school has serious concerns in relation to managing the behaviour of a pupil, the advice of the National Education Psychological Service (NEPS) should be sought.

Referral of serious cases

In relation to bullying in schools, *Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017* (Children First) and the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* provide that in situations where "the incident is serious and where the behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive, the school must consult Tusla with a view to drawing up an appropriate response, such as a management plan".

Serious instances of bullying behaviour should, in accordance with the Children First and *the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*, be referred to Tusla and/or Gardaí as appropriate.

The *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* also provide that where school personnel have concerns about a child but are not sure whether to report the matter the Designated Liaison Person must seek advice from Tusla.

Support for pupils affected by bullying

A programme for support for pupils who have been bullied is in place. Such pupils may need counselling and/or opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed.

Given the complexity of bullying behaviour, no one intervention/support programme works in all situations. Therefore, various approaches and intervention strategies may be used including suggesting that parents seek referrals to appropriate outside agencies in order to receive further support for the pupils and their families if needed. A programme of support for those pupils involved in bullying behaviour must also be part of the school's intervention process. Pupils involved in bullying behaviour need assistance on an ongoing basis. For those with low self-esteem, opportunities will be developed to increase feelings of self-worth. The learning strategies applied within the school will allow for the enhancement of the pupil's self-worth. Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.

All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience e.g. Some supports that the school provides are outlined below. This list is not exhaustive and depending on the level of bullying may require other individualised support strategies:

- SPHE Lessons
- Stay Safe Programme
- Walk Tall
- NEPS programmes on www.neps.ie
- Anti Bullying Week

If pupils require counselling or further support, the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise the same. The school's NEPS Psychologist will also be contacted for advice.

Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

Evaluation

The effectiveness of the school's anti-bullying policy should be subject to continuous review in the light of incidents of bullying behaviour encountered. The school will make provision for periodic examination of the prevention and intervention strategies in place.

The template in **Appendix 3** for recording and reporting bullying to the school Principal or Deputy Principal will be a valuable and readily accessible source of data in relation to bullying behaviour in the school. Data gathered from these reports will be regularly (at least once in every school year) collated and analysed with a view to monitoring levels of bullying behaviour and identifying any particular issues that require attention or any significant trends in behaviour. A record of this analysis will be retained and be made available to the Board of

Management. Appropriate responses to any issues identified will be drawn up and implemented. The implementation and effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy will be included as an agenda item for staff meetings so as to ensure that concerns about the policy or the welfare of individual pupils can be shared and effectively addressed.

7. OVERSIGHT

At least once in every school term, the Principal will provide a report to the Board of Management setting out:

(i) the overall number of bullying cases reported (by means of the bullying recording template at **Appendix 3**) since the previous report to the Board and

(ii) confirmation that all cases referred to at (i) above 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*.

The minutes of the Board of Management meeting will record the above but in doing so will not include any identifying details of the pupils involved.

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 AND 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. RATIFICATION

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 13-12-2022

11. PUBLICATION

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

Appendix 3 Template for recording bullying behaviour

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))*

Pupil concerned	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

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

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

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9. Details of actions taken

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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.