

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 Goggins Hill N.S. 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 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:

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.

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. The relevant teacher for investigating and dealing with bullying will normally be the class teacher or Ms. Deasy as nominated "talk time" teacher.

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):

- Prevention and awareness raising measures across all aspects of bullying, involving strategies to engage pupils in addressing problems when they arise. In particular, such strategies need to build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils. At least five awareness-raising exercises per school year for each class group from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> class will be used from *Tools for Raising Awareness About Bullying* ([www.antibullyingcampaign.ie](http://www.antibullyingcampaign.ie)) which pro-actively explain the nature and variety, causes, consequences and unacceptability of bullying.
  - Pupils are helped to examine the issue of bullying in a calm rational way, outside of the tense context of particular bullying incidents. In the process they are made more aware of the nature of bullying and the various forms that it can take.
  - Pupils are made aware that the consequences of bullying behaviour are always bad for those who are targeted, even if this is not always obvious at the time.
  - Pupils are encouraged to recognise, reject and report bullying behaviour
- 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 programme, taught bi-annually, is a personal safety skills programme which seeks to enhance children's self-protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying. (see SPHE Plan)

- Specific programmes taught in Goggins Hill N.S. include; Zippy's Friends programme (Seniors- 2<sup>nd</sup>) and Friends for Life programme (5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup>)
- Goggins Hill N.S. is part of the HSE Health Promoting Schools programme. The Student Council organise a Buddy System each year for younger classes. There are positive playground rules as well as a 'friendship stop' on display in the playground. As part of this HSE programme a friendship week takes place annually.
- Goggins Hill N.S. recognises and strives for inclusion of pupils with disabilities or with special educational needs; focusing on developing social skills, and cultivating a good school culture which has respect for all and where helping one another is central to preventing bullying of more vulnerable pupils. Busy Breaks and the Alert programme are used where appropriate.
- Within the teaching of all subjects the teachers aim to foster an attitude of respect for all: to promote the value of diversity; to address prejudice and stereotyping and to highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour. These aims are also encouraged in sporting activities and in-school clubs. School staff will be clearly identified by name, role at the beginning of each school year and displayed in the school hall.
- Through presentations or other exercises, the school staff and parents/guardians are made aware of the nature of bullying and the signs that might indicate that a pupil is being bullied. They are encouraged to be vigilant in watching out for signs of bullying and to report any suspicion of bullying they may have to the 'Relevant Teacher'. To introduce this revised policy a whole school meeting will be held in Autumn 2014.

6 A consistent and clear approach to dealing with bullying when it occurs is essential to effective practice.

**The primary aim for the relevant teacher 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).**

However, given the complexity of bullying behaviour it is generally acknowledged that no one intervention works in all situations, therefore 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;

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:

## **Stage 1: Investigation**

- The 'Relevant Teacher' investigates all instances of reported or suspected bullying behaviour, whether these take place within the school or outside it, which have an impact on the child in school, with a view to establishing the facts and bringing any such behaviour to an end. In the event that a report of bullying taking place outside the school environment, parents will be notified as soon as possible by the relevant teacher, as it would be very difficult to investigate such an incident from within the confines of the school.
  - Incidents are generally 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 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.
- The School, through the 'Relevant Teacher' reserves the right to ask any pupil to write an account of what happened, as part of an investigation. This will be a standard procedure in senior classes from 2<sup>nd</sup> class onwards and does not necessarily imply that a pupil is guilty of misbehaviour.
- Pupils who are alleged to have been involved in bullying behaviour are interviewed by the 'Relevant Teacher' to establish the nature and extent of the behaviour and any reasons for it.
- The 'Relevant Teacher' does not apportion blame but rather treats bullying behaviour as a 'mistake' that can and must be remedied. S/he emphasises that the intention is not to punish perpetrators but to talk to them, to explain how harmful and hurtful bullying is and to seek a promise that it will stop.

## **Stage 2: Resolution (Informal Process)**

- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved will be contacted at the earliest opportunity to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken. The school will 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.
- In the event that they have been involved in bullying behaviour, pupils are asked to sign a binding promise that they will treat all pupils fairly, equally and respectfully including the targeted pupil(s). This will be countersigned by parents. This standard form will be sent home to complete with parents.
- If that promise is forthcoming and is honoured there will be no penalty and that will be the end of the matter. Pupils who report bullying therefore are not getting others

‘in trouble’ so much as enabling them to get out of trouble into which they may ultimately get if the bullying continued.

- 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. It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset.
- When an investigation is completed and/or a bullying situation is resolved the 'Relevant Teacher' will complete a report, to include the findings of the investigation, the strategy adopted and the outcome of the intervention, as well as any other relevant information.

### **Stage 3: Lack of Resolution and/or Reoccurrence (Formal Process)**

- If a pupil has signed a promise but then chooses to break that promise and continue the bullying behaviour, this can then no longer be considered a ‘mistake.’ Breach of this promise by further bullying behaviour is regarded as a very grave matter and a serious sanction may be imposed by the school authorities (See sanctions below).
- In this event parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed as soon as possible. A meeting with the class teacher, principal, parents (and where appropriate, the pupil), will take place to discuss the nature and extent of the bullying behaviour with a view to agreeing a strategy whereby a promise to end the bullying behaviour would be honoured; Further intervention and awareness exercises will be undertaken by the pupil(s) involved; this may take the form of additional support from school support staff.
- In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately 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 standard recording template.
- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:
  1. Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased
  2. Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable
  3. Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable
  4. Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal

### **Right to Appeal**

- 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.
- All documentation regarding bullying incidents and their resolution is retained securely in the school.

## **Sanctions**

Where a pupil has been found to be engaged in bullying behaviour, has formally promised to stop and has broken that promise, parent(s)/guardian(s) will be invited to a meeting with the 'Relevant Teacher' and the Principal and any of the following sanctions may be imposed:

- The pupil may be suspended from school.
- The case may be referred to the Board of Management and the pupil may be expelled from the school.
- In cases where the school has serious concerns in relation to managing the behaviour of a pupil, the advice of the National Education Psychological Service (NEPS) may be sought.
- It is important to make 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.

## **Procedures for Recording Bullying Behaviour**

- 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 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.
- The relevant teacher must use the recording template at Appendix 3 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) in certain circumstances, where the health and safety of pupil(s) and/or staff is put at risk, bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal.

- In each of the circumstances at (a) and (b) above, the recording template at Appendix 3 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 teacher from consulting the Principal or Deputy Principal at an earlier stage in relation to a case.

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

- A programme of support for pupils who have been bullied will be put 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.
- A programme of support for those pupils involved in bullying behaviour will 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.
- 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.
- Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour are encouraged to discuss them with teachers.
- Through consultation with class teachers, parents and support staff, pupils may be offered 1-1 support or group support in developing relevant social skills. "The young person needs to be involved in the development of strategies, to consent to interventions wherever possible, to express their wishes. They need to be listened to and taken seriously and to have a controlling interest in the enterprise" (Action on Bullying Report).

## 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 \_\_\_\_\_.

11. 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.

12. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. At the end of year 1 a comprehensive review will be undertaken, taking on board feedback from BoM, staff, parents and pupils. 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.

In addition, at least once in every school term, the Principal must provide a report to the Board of Management setting out the overall number of bullying cases reported (Appendix 3) since the previous report to the Board and confirm that all cases referred have been or are being, dealt with in accordance with this policy and the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools*. The minutes of the Board of Management meeting must record the above but in doing so must not include any identifying details of the pupils involved.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

(Principal)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of next review: \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix 1.

***Bullying can take a number of forms. These may include any of the following (this list is not exhaustive):***

- **Repeated aggressive behaviour/attitude/body language, for example:**
  - Shouting and uncontrolled anger
  - Personal insults
  - Verbal abuse
  - Offensive language directed at an individual,
  - Continually shouting or dismissing others
  - Public verbal attacks/criticism
  - Domineering behaviour
  - Open aggression
  - Offensive gestures and unwanted physical contact
- **Intimidation, either physical, psychological or emotional, for example:**
  - Treating in a dictatorial manner
  - Ridicule
  - Persistent slugging
  - Deliberate staring with the intent to discomfort
  - Persistent rudeness in behaviour and attitude toward a particular individual
  - Asking inappropriate questions/making inappropriate comments re. personal life/family
  - Asking inappropriate questions/making inappropriate comments re. social life or schoolwork
- **Interference with property, for example:**
  - Stealing/damaging books or equipment
  - Stealing/damaging clothing or other property
  - Demanding money with menaces
  - Persistently moving, hiding or interfering with property
  - Marking/defacing property
- **Undermining/Public or Private Humiliation, for example:**
  - Condescending tone

Deliberately withholding significant information and resources

Writing of anonymous notes

Malicious, disparaging or demeaning comments

Malicious tricks/derogatory joke,

Knowingly spreading rumours

Belittling others' efforts, their enthusiasm or their new idea,

Derogatory or offensive nicknames (name-calling)

Using electronic or other media for any of the above (cyber bullying,

Disrespectfully mimicking a particular individual in his/her absence

Deliberately refusing to address issues focusing instead on the person

- **Ostracising or isolating, for example:**

Deliberately marginalising an individual

Deliberately preventing a person from joining a group

Deliberately preventing from joining in an activity, schoolwork-related or recreational

Blaming a pupil for things s/he did not do