

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Ramsgrange National School

New Ross, Co. Wexford

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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 Ramsgrange NS 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's Teaching Council's Professional code of conduct for Teacher's.

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-
 1. Is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
 2. Encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
 3. 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 -
 1. Build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
 2. Explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and Trans phobic 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.

Definition

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 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, Appendix 1.

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Roles and Responsibility

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 School*):

- The Class Teacher
- The Deputy Principal/Principal

Anti-bullying preventive strategy

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 and teachers will be using a range of these.

- Staff at all times will endeavour to encourage pupils to show respect for each other.
- The Stay Safe Programme will be fully implemented in the school.
- Parents are encouraged to visit the Stay Safe website and a link is provided from the school website.
- The SPHE curriculum provides opportunities for role playing bullying incidents and conflict resolution.
- Specific lessons dealing with respect, self-esteem, friendship and the issue of bullying will be taught about informally and through the SPHE programme, Circle time, Stay Safe Programme and so forth.
- Extra-curricular activities are encouraged to help develop pupils' self esteem and experience the discipline of following rules in sport.
- Persistent offenders may also be referred to outside agencies eg. NEPS, Health Board, Gardáí (see DES Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures)
- The school will promote home/school/community links to counter bullying behaviour.
- For cases of adult bullying the procedures as outlined in the INTO/Management bodies publication "Working Together. Procedures and Policies for Positive Staff Relations" will be followed.
- Our anti bullying policy will be evaluated regularly - by regularly assessing the level and type of bullying behaviour that may be happening in the school. Amendments/actions to be taken as a result of these findings will be recorded.

Procedures for Investigation

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, (eg the six step approach available from the "Dealing with Incidents" section of the Anti-Bullying campaign website) are as follows:

- The "Relevant Teacher" investigates all instances of reported or suspected bullying behaviour, whether these take place within the school or outside it, with a view to establishing the facts and bringing any such behaviour to an end.
- 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 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. In the event that they have been involved in bullying behaviour they are asked to sign a binding promise that they will treat all pupils fairly, equally and respectfully including the targeted pupil(s).
- 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. If that promise is forthcoming and is honoured there 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.
- 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.
- If a pupil has signed such a promise but then chooses to break that promise and continue the bullying behaviour, this can then no longer be considered a "mistake". In this event Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be informed and requested to countersign their daughter/son's promise. Breach of this additional promise by further bullying behaviour is regarded as a very grave matter and a serious sanction may be imposed by the school authorities.
- 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, any of the following sanctions may be imposed.

1. S/he may be required to sign another promise, this time countersigned by a parent/guardian;
2. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) may be contacted by the "Relevant Teacher" and informed of 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;
3. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) may be invited to a meeting with the "Relevant Teacher" and the Principal and the pupil may be suspended from school.
4. The case may be referred to the Board of Management and the pupil may be expelled from the school.

Programme of Support

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

- All staff dealing with a bullying incident will, as well as reasoning with the pupil perpetrating the negative behaviour, also offer support and comfort to the victim.
- In more serious incidents the victim will also receive guidance from Ms Cooper, Ms Morrissey or Ms Kehoe and parents/guardians will be informed.
- In order to build self esteem some children may be invited to assist in the organisation of, or participate in extra-curricular activities at break time.

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 of 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.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on the _____ April 2014.

This policy has been made available to school personnel and published on the school website and is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the Patron if requested.

Review/Ratification

This policy and its implementations 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 be otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request 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

Ms Lorraine Cooper
Principal

Mr. Hugh O Kelly
Chairperson of the Board of Management

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____

Appendix 1

Ramsgrange National School.

Bullying

Bullying

Bullying affects everyone, not just the bullies and the victims. It also affects those other children who watch, and less aggressive pupils can be drawn in by group pressure.

Bullying is not inevitable part of school life or a necessary part of growing up.

The school believes that the pupils have the right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without the fear of being bullied.

To counteract and prevent bullying, pupils are helped in school to develop their self-esteem and confidence and to respect and value themselves, their own rights and the rights of others. This is done in a structured way through the "Stay Safe" programme, the "Walk Tall" programme and the school's "R.S.E." programme.

Bullying is repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against others. Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, which certainly will not condoned, do not always constitute bullying. However, when the behaviour is systematic and ongoing, it is bullying.

Bullying can be:

Verbal/emotional: Verbal attacks can be of a highly personal or sexual nature. They can be directed at the child's family, culture, race, religion, appearance, dress, difference, disability etc... Includes name calling and comments which hurt, insult or humiliate.

Physical: Physical bullying is often written off as 'only messing' or 'horseplay'. Both boys and girls indulge in physical bullying, boys perhaps more so as they have a greater tendency towards physical aggression. Includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking, tripping, 'kicking a ball at', etc.

Gesture Bullying: This can convey intimidatory and frightening messages. For example, the state or look, which accompanies bullying behaviour.

Exclusion Bullying: This is particularly hurtful because it isolates the child from his or her peer group and is very hard for the child to combat as it directly attacks their self-confidence/self-image.

Extortion Bullying: Demands for money, possessions or equipment, often accompanied by threats.

Damage to Property or Theft: Pupils may have their property damaged or stolen.

'E-Bullying': with the advance of technology, a new type of bullying has emerged which utilises web pages, e-mails and text messaging to abuse, intimidate or attack others.

HOW BULLYING IS DEALT WITH:

- All reports of bullying in St. James' National School are taken very seriously and in the first instance are investigated and dealt with by the class teacher of the children concerned. Pupils, (victims/bullies) are spoken to about alleged bullying, either individually or in groups.
- Teacher dealing with the situation endeavours to re-establish the bullied child's self confidence and image and explains to the bully/bullies the effect that this type of behaviour has and how and why it is wrong. Teacher may administer reprimand or punishment to bully/bullies.
- Serious and ongoing cases of bullying behaviour are referred to the principal/vice-principal.
- Principal/vice-principal supports the class teacher in dealing with the situation, supports the victim and impresses on the bullies the wrongness of their actions.
- Principal/vice-principal may inform parents/guardians of pupils (victims and bullies) so they are given an opportunity to discuss the matter and find the best method of resolving it within the framework of the existing code of behaviour and discipline.

St James' National School takes particular care to provide early intervention in responding to the needs, fears or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner.

Incidents of bullying will be dealt with in the same manner as breaches of discipline, already outlined in our code of behaviour and discipline.

Bullying not accepted in our school and it is made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying, they are not 'telling tales' but, behaving in a sensible way.

Appendix 2 Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate

The following are some practical tips for immediate actions that can be taken to help build a positive school culture and climate and to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour.

- Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.
- Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.
- Catch them being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN.
- Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.
- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.
- Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use.
- Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.
- Actively involve parents and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media.
- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.
- Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.
- All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- Ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.
- School staff can get pupils to help them to identify bullying “hot spots” and “hot times” for bullying in the school.
 - Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas, changing rooms, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision.
 - Hot times again tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when pupils are in the playground/school yard or moving classrooms.
- Support the establishment and work of student councils.

Appendix 3 Bullying Incident Investigation Form

St. James' National School

Ramsgrange, New Ross
Co. Wexford
(051) 389363

School e-mail: stjamesns@eircom.net

Principal's e-mail: ramsgrangens@live.ie

Website: ramsgrangens.com

"Educating for Enrichment and Enjoyment".

"Oiliúint chun tairbhe agus taitneamh a bhaint as an saol"

Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or a group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

Bullying in any form will not be tolerated in Ramsgrange National School. It is our school policy to take any matter of alleged bullying very seriously.

Please supply any details which you think may assist our investigation.

1. Name of pupil being bullied and 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/report (tick relevant box(es))*

| | |
|-----------------|--------------------------|
| Pupil concerned | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other Pupil | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Parent | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Teacher | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other | <input type="checkbox"/> |

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

| | |
|------------|--------------------------|
| Playground | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Classroom | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Corridor | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Toilets | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| School Bus | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other | <input type="checkbox"/> |

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 | <input type="checkbox"/> | Cyber-bullying | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Damage to Property | <input type="checkbox"/> | Intimidation | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Isolation/Exclusion | <input type="checkbox"/> | Malicious Gossip | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Name Calling | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other (specify) | <input type="checkbox"/> |

7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:

| | | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Homophobic | Disability/SEN related | Racist | Membership of Traveller community | Other (specify) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

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9. Details of actions taken

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| |
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Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

Appendix 4 Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation. The following checklist must be used for this purpose. The checklist is an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. In order to complete the checklist, an examination and review involving both quantitative and qualitative analysis, as appropriate across the various elements of the implementation of the school's anti-bullying policy will be required.

| | Yes /No |
|--|---------|
| Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools</i> ? | |
| Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association? | |
| Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)? | |
| Is the Board satisfied that school staff are sufficiently familiar with the policy and procedures to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy and procedures in their day to day work? | |
| Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils? | |
| Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies? | |
| Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented? | |
| Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined? | |
| Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy? | |
| Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal? | |
| Has the Board discussed how well the school is handling all reports of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and not therefore included in the Principal's periodic report to the Board? | |
| Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents? | |
| Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation? | |
| Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed? | |
| Has the data available from cases reported to the Principal (by the bullying recording template) been analysed to identify any issues, trends or patterns in bullying behaviour? | |
| Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement? | |
| Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement? | |

Signed _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date _____

Signed _____
Principal

Date _____

Notification regarding the Board of Management’s annual review of the anti-bullying policy

To: _____

The Board of Management of _____ wishes to inform you that:

- The Board of Management’s annual review of the school’s anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of _____ [date].

- This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in **Appendix 4** of the Department’s *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Signed _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date _____

Signed _____
Principal

Date _____