



Rolestown 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 Brighde Naofa (Rolestown 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) 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;

(b) Effective leadership

(c) A school-wide approach

(d) A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact

(e) 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;

(f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils.

(g) Supports for staff

(h) Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and

(i) 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 (See Appendix 1)*

4. The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying in accordance with the Anti -Bullying Procedures for Primary & Post Primary Schools – section 6:7.6, 6:7.7 - are as follows:

Class Teachers,

Principal,

Deputy Principal.

Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

5. Education and prevention strategies

School-wide approach

- Rolestown N.S. adopts a school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.
- The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- The fostering and enhancing of the **self-esteem** of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Pupils will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.
- **Whole staff professional development** on bullying to ensure that all staff develops an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it-prevention and intervention.
- **School wide awareness raising** and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community.
- **Supervision and monitoring** of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra- curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.
- The implementation of regular (e.g. per year/per term) **whole school awareness measures** e.g. the promotion of friendship, and bullying prevention; annual Friendship Week and parent(s)/guardian(s) seminars; regular school assemblies by principal.
- **Creating a culture of telling:** The staff at RNS repeatedly reinforce the message that all incidents of Bullying behaviour must be reported. Reassurance is given that all incidents of bullying will be dealt with in a safe manner.
- **The role of Bystanders;** Bystanders can be key to resolving bullying. 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.
- **Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how e.g.**
 - Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time e.g. after class.
 - Hand a note up with work /assignment.
 - Ask an SNA to tell.
 - Ask a parent / guardian to tell.
 - Ask a friend /peer to tell.
 - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- **Clear protocols** to encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied. If a parent suspects that their child is being bullied we ask them to contact the **class teacher** immediately.
- Implementation of the school's **Acceptable Use Policy** in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored and the pupils' use of mobile phones is strictly prohibited.
- The **listing of supports** currently being used in the school and the identification of other supports available to the school e.g. web wise presentation for parents, Zeeko Internet Safety, anti-bullying campaign.
- At least three awareness raising exercises per school year for each class group e.g. awareness raising strand of the anti-bullying campaign, proactively explaining the nature and variety, causes, consequences and unacceptability of bullying.

Implementation of curricula

Teachers influence attitudes to bullying behaviour in a positive manner through a range of curricular initiatives. 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 interrelated areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships.

The **Weaving Well-Being** programme gives children the opportunity to weave positivity into their daily lives through a range of activities in a variety of areas resilience skills (including mindfulness) and developing self-efficacy through empowering beliefs. The lessons are designed to be implemented within the framework of the SPHE curriculum.

The Stay Safe programme is a personal safety skills programme which seeks to enhance children's self-protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying.

RSE aims to provide opportunities for children to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way.

Other resources and programmes include; PDST Anti-Bullying Support Material, Webwise, Zeeko, Walk Tall.

Delivery of lessons on **Cyber Bullying** and **Diversity and Interculturalism** at the appropriate class levels.

The school will specifically consider the additional needs of **SEN pupils** with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.

Fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem and building empathy and resilience in pupils.

- Weaving Wellbeing programme.
- Random acts of kindness read weekly in class.
- Rewarding incidents of good and improved behaviour by giving an in class reward.
- Celebration of friendship week.
- Extracurricular activities available for all pupils.
- Formal and informal interactions with staff around the school.

Cyber Bullying

- Promoting awareness of Rolestown NS Acceptable Use Policy and ensuring that access to technology in the school is monitored, as is the pupils use of mobile phones.
- Communicating the message that unlike other forms of bullying, a once off posting can constitute bullying.
- Advice will be communicated to help students protect themselves from being involved in bullying and to advise them to report incidents. A telling atmosphere is encouraged where pupils will report cyber bullying where they see it.
- *Publicising ways of dealing with cyber bullying.*
 - Don't reply.
 - Keep the message.
 - Block the sender.

- Tell someone.
 - STOP / BLOCK / TELL
- Promoting Internet Safety Day and activities.

- Where issues of identity based bullying arise, the school will deal with them as an individual, group, class or whole school in consultation with the parents/guardians of the children involved. The ethos of the school and the age/stage of the pupils involved will be taken into consideration.
- The school has an Acceptable Use Policy in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored, as is the pupils' use of mobile phones.

Links to other policies

Hereunder is a List of school policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to bullying:

- Code of Behaviour
- Child Safeguarding Policy,
- Supervision of pupils,
- Acceptable Use policy,
- SEN Policy,
- RSE Policy
- SPHE Policy

6. Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

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);

Reporting bullying behaviour

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to the Class Teacher. **Incident report forms** will be kept in all classrooms and in the office and are completed thereafter.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the Class Teacher. (Any teacher may act as the relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it)
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers, must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them to the relevant teacher.

Investigating and dealing with allegations of bullying behaviour:

- The Relevant Teacher investigates the allegation of bullying behaviour with a view to establishing the facts and bringing any such behaviour to an end. In investigating and dealing with allegations of bullying, the (relevant)teacher will exercise his/her

professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;

- The school, through the relevant teacher reserves the right to ask any teacher to write an account of what happened as part of an investigation. This does not necessarily imply that a pupil is guilty of misbehaviour.
- The relevant teacher(s) then conducts a class survey in the classes involved in the alleged bullying behaviour.
- Following the class survey the alleged perpetrator is interviewed by the class teacher. 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. Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.
- Where possible incidents should be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
- 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;
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after the interview by the teacher; 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 that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parent(s)/guardian(s) 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 parent(s)/guardian(s) an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the pupils;
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) 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;
- Where the relevant 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;
- It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parent(s)/guardian(s)) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school;
- 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 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.
- 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. This information is recorded on the back of the Incident report form and on the Appendix 3 document which is filed and stored by the Principal.
- 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 (See sanctions below).
- All documentation regarding bullying incidents and their resolution is retained securely by the relevant teacher during investigation and a copy is handed over to the Principal thereafter.

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:

- S/he may be required to sign another promise, this time countersigned by a parent/guardian;
- 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;
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) may be invited to a meeting with the 'Relevant Teacher'.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s), the relevant teacher and the Principal meet in a final effort to resolve the situation.
- The pupil may be suspended from the school. (See school's Code of behaviour)
- The case may be referred to the Board of Management and the pupil may be expelled from the school.

Follow up and recording

- 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:
 - 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;

- o Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardian(s)s or the school Principal or Deputy Principal
- 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.
- Where a parent(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
- In the event that a parent(s)/guardian(s) has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Recording of bullying behaviour

It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner.

The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

Informal- pre-determination that bullying has occurred

- All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them on the incident report form. Incident report forms will be kept in all classrooms and in the office. All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher.
- While all reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher must keep a written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same. This is recorded on the back of the Incident Report Form.
- The relevant teacher must inform the principal of all incidents being investigated.

Formal Stage 1-determination that bullying has occurred

- If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must keep appropriate written records (Incident report form from the anti bullying campaign programme) which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- The school in consultation with the relevant teacher/s should develop a protocol for the storage of all records retained by the relevant teacher.

Formal Stage 2-Appendix 3 (From DES Procedures)

The relevant teacher must again 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) 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.

When the recording template is used, **it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal.** Due consideration needs to be given to where these records are kept, who has access to them, and how long they will be retained.

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

Bullied pupils:

- Ending the bullying behaviour,
- Changing the school culture to foster more respect for bullied pupils and all pupils,
- Changing the school culture to foster greater empathy towards and support for bullied pupils,
- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the awareness-raising programme,
- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the speedy identification of those responsible and speedy resolution of bullying situations,
- Helping bullied pupils raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school).
- If pupils require counselling or further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same, i.e. NEPS, HSE..

Bullying pupils:

- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are not blamed or punished and get a 'clean sheet,'
- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are doing the right and honourable thing and giving them praise for this,
- Helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school),
- Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils' feelings of self-worth,
- In dealing with negative behaviour in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child,
- In dealing with bullying behaviour seeking resolution and offering a fresh start with a 'clean sheet' and no blame in return for keeping a promise to reform.

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 (revised) policy was adopted by the Board of Management on June 22.

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website www.rolestownns.ie, is available at 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.

12. 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 be 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: Marie Bailey
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: Elaine O'Brien
(Principal)

Date: 15/04/24

Date: 15/4/24

Date of next review sept '24