

EDMONDSTOWN NATIONAL SCHOOL



Anti-bullying Policy

1: Full Compliance

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 Edmondstown 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. A copy of the school's Code of Behaviour is attached as Appendix C.

2: Key Principles of Best Practice

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 way
 - 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
 - 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)
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy

3. The Definition of Bullying

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, extortion, isolation and persistent name calling
- Cyber Bullying:- use of mobile phones and or social media with the objective of upsetting someone, c/f Acceptable Use Policy.
- Identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, and bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

Isolated or one-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 one-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.

This policy applies to activities and events that take place:

- During school time (including break times)
- Going to and from school
- School tours
- Extra-curricular activities

Edmondstown National School reserves the right to take action against bullying perpetrated outside the school which spills over into the school.

4. Who is responsible for doing what?

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

A consistent and clear approach to investigating and dealing with bullying when it occurs is necessary. A pupil or parent can bring a bullying concern to **any** teacher in the school.

However, it is common practice that the relevant teacher for investigating and dealing with bullying is the class teacher.

It is advisable that any parent wishing to report a case of bullying should make an appointment with the relevant teacher, so the conversation can be held in private and not in front of children. **A parent should never approach a child in relation to bullying incidents.** The class teacher will use his/her professional judgement and discern whether it is appropriate to ask the parent to complete a Care Form with their child and to return it the following day. See *Appendix A*.

Other people may see the need to report cases of bullying including, SNAs, teachers, cleaners, caretakers, secretary and they will be encouraged to report such matters to the relevant class teacher.

The Principal will be informed and kept up to date with developments, but does not get involved at the early stage. If the class teacher feels the need to investigate the matter further, then the Deputy Principal or another nominated staff member may be made available to sit in on any interviews with the children involved.

The Board of Management will set out to review the Anti-Bullying Policy on an annual basis.

5. Our Education and Prevention Strategies

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:

- Anti-Bullying Institute (ABI) Care Programme is adapted as a preventative measure in Edmondstown National School.
- Circle Time as set out in our SPHE Programme allows the children ample opportunity to talk about their concerns in a safe environment.
- Friendship Week encourages the children to dwell on the positive aspects of relationships.
- Care Promises sheets and/or Class Contracts suitable for each class level, are signed annually by each pupil in the school to reinforce our Anti-Bullying stance.
- Staff members in Edmondstown National School are committed to ongoing professional development, specifically in relation to anti-bullying.
- The parents' association hosts information evenings occasionally, with guest speakers, on the topic of anti-bullying.
- If required, externally led workshops may be held to assist with the implementation of this policy.

6. Our Procedures for Investigation of 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:

- a) Edmondstown National School is a *telling school*, as defined in the Stay Safe Programme and therefore our pupils are encouraged to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour. Any member of staff can be approached with a report of an incident, or children may tell their parents who in turn can contact the relevant teacher.
- b) The relevant teacher will note and record the disclosure and use his/her professional judgement to decide whether an investigation is necessary at this stage or if monitoring the situation for a period of time might be appropriate, or inclusion as a topic for ABI programme circle time.
- c) If an investigation is deemed necessary then the teacher together with another member of staff will interview the children involved to determine who, what, where, when and why?
- d) If a group is involved, they will be met individually and together. The accounts given by the pupil/s will be recorded and kept in a secure place should they be needed for evidence at a later stage.
- e) Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information which can greatly assist with the investigation.
- f) When it has been determined that bullying behaviour has been displayed, the parents of the alleged bully will be invited to meet the relevant teacher to hear the findings of the investigation and to discuss how to solve the problem.
- g) **The alleged bully will be asked to reflect on his/her behaviour and its consequences for himself/herself and for the victims. Parents and child/children will be advised of the 20 school day "healing period" within which the bullying behaviour must be seen to have ceased.**
- h) The situation will be monitored to ensure the problem has been resolved.
- i) If a case remains unresolved the teacher must complete *Appendix B "Record of Bullying Behaviour"* and submit to the Principal/Deputy Principal. The matter will be referred to the Board of Management which may in turn invoke the Code of Behaviour - *Appendix C*.
- j) Additionally, if parents are not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, they may go through the complaints procedures as laid out by the school.
- k) In the event that parents have exhausted the school's complaints procedures and are still not satisfied, parents have the right to refer their complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

7. Programme of support

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

The children who have been affected by bullying are not just the victims, but those who have displayed the bullying behaviour and those who were bystanders or witnesses to instances of bullying. To this end we in Edmondstown National School have supports in place for the prevention of, identification of, and resolution of bullying behaviour.

These include:

- a. Circle Time
- b. Stay Safe Programme
- c. Walk Tall Programme
- d. Friendship Week
- e. ABI care programme
- f. Reconciliation
- g. Counselling (Guidance from NEPS and Trinity College Anti-Bullying Team)
- h. Tusla (Where serious concerns arise in relation to the behaviour or well being of a pupil, contact will be made with Tusla)

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. Adoption of Policy

The original policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Edmondstown National School on 25th June 2020. This reviewed policy was ratified on 13th June 2023.

11. Availability of this Policy

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 of Education and Skills and the patron if requested.

12. Review of this Policy

The Board of Management of Edmondstown National School undertakes to review the Anti-Bullying Policy on an annual basis. Written notification of the review will be posted on the website and copies circulated to the relevant parties. A copy will also be available on request to the Department of Education and Skills and the patron.

Signed: **Rev. R. Lyng, OS**

Date: 13th June 2023

Chairperson of the Board of Management

Signed: **Philomena Cleary**

Date: 13th June 2023

Principal