



Firoda 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 Firoda National School has adopted the following antibullying policy within the framework of the school's overall Code of Behaviour. The policy fully complies with the requirements of the *AntiBullying 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-
 - o is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
 - o encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
 - o 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-
 - o build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and

- o explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identitybased 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 is the class teacher initially, and the Principal teacher thereafter, if necessary. The relevant teacher will consult with the Principal/deputy Principal once an allegation has

been made. In the absence of the Principal, the deputy Principal will become the relevant person.

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:

- We will adopt a whole school approach where all have a shared understanding of what constitutes bullying and an awareness of its negative impact.
- The school community will promote and foster an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and friendship.
- We will promote children's sense of self worth through the acknowledgement and celebration of individual differences and uniqueness. This shall be achieved through the acknowledgement of their achievements, rewarding good behaviour and providing opportunities for success throughout the curriculum.
- The schools Code of Behaviour will be brought to the attention of all pupils at the start of the school year. The rules and reasons for them will be taught and discussed and referenced throughout the school year, on a needs basis. All shall be carried out at an age appropriate level.
- Teachers will assist children in developing empathy through discussing feelings and encouraging children to 'place themselves in the other person's shoes'. Problem solving strategies will be explored with the children to help resolve any conflict.
- Children will be made aware that bullying is an unacceptable form of behaviour. This shall be achieved through following the Stay Safe, Walk Tall and RSE programmes. Linkage to the RSE, Drama and P.E. curriculum shall be made, where applicable.
- Teachers will engage children in group activities which will encourage them to work together, co-operate, listen to and respect one another's views; e.g. Aistear, Team Teaching and sporting events.
- We will ensure that comprehensive supervision and monitoring measures are in place.
- We will endeavour to educate children on appropriate online behaviour, raising awareness of cyber-bullying and its implications.

6. 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:

Reporting bullying behaviour:

- a) Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.

- b) All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
- c) Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must report any incident of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

Investigating and dealing with incidents

- a) In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher(s), in consultation with the Principal/Deputy Principal, will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred, what type of bullying and how best to resolve the situation.
- b) 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 practicable, the relationships of the parties involved, as quickly as possible.
- c) It is very important that all involved, parents and pupils, understand the above approach from the outset.
- d) Teachers will take a calm, unemotional, problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.
- e) Initial investigations of bullying will be done in class, where possible, however, some incidents might be best investigated outside of the classroom situation, to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- f) All interviews will 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.
- g) When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher(s) will seek answers to questions of what, who, where, when and why. This will be achieved in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
- h) If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved will be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member will be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements.
- i) Each member of the group will be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after being interviewed by the teacher.
- j) It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s), where age appropriate.
- k) In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher, in consultation with the Principal/Deputy Principal, that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved will 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 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.
- l) Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of

the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts will be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.

- m) It will also be made clear to all involved (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 and recording

- a) In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed, the relevant teacher must, in consultation with the Principal/Deputy Principal, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:

I. Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased:

- Whether any issues between the parties involved have been resolved, as far as is practicable.
- Whether the relationship between the parties have been restored, as far as practicable
- Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the Principal or Deputy Principal.

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.

- II. An additional follow-up meeting with parents of children involved may take place after an appropriate time to ensure that the matter has been resolved satisfactorily.
- III. Where a parent/guardian is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents will be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
- IV. In the event that a parent/guardian has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school will advise the parents/guardians of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Recording of Bullying Behaviour

Noting and reporting of bullying behaviour will be documented using the template for the recording bullying behaviour (Appendix 3). All records will be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. The school's procedures for noting and recording bullying behaviour will adhere to the following:

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 in the incident book. All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher.
- While all reports, including anonymous 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. A copy of this is to be given to the Principal.
- The relevant teacher must inform the Principal of all incidents being investigated.

Formal: Stage 1- determination that bullying has occurred:

- If it has been 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.

Formal: Stage 2 -Appendix 3 (DES Procedures excerpt)

- The relevant teacher, in consultation with the principal/Deputy Principal must use the recording template at Appendix 3 to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:
 - In cases where he/she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately addressed with 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred
 - 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 and a copy maintained by the Principal.

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying involves a whole school approach. 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.

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 and published on the school website. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of education and Skills 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 and published on the school website. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: _____
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _____
(Principal)

Date: _____

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____