

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 (BOM) of Little Flower N.S. has adopted the following anti- bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour. The 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 BOM 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 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;
 - promotes respectful relationships across the whole 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, investigating and follow up of bullying behaviour(including use of established intervention strategies); and
 - Ongoing 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 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.
- Identity based bullying such as homophobic bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the travelling 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 will be dealt with as 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.

4. **The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying** are firstly the class teachers, the Principal and Deputy Principal. The relevant LSRT teacher may also be involved with a specific class.
5. **The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) will be as follows:**

Creation of a culture of "telling".

- Teachers should repeatedly reinforce the message that if anyone is the victim of bullying behaviour, they should not retaliate in any way, but they should tell an adult. Victims should be reassured that if they tell, something will be done about the bullying in a safe manner and all reported incidents will be dealt with.
- Class lessons to be provided to enable pupils "how to tell" (telling protocol)
- Bystanders can be the key to resolving bullying and if anyone witnesses bullying behaviour, they should always tell a teacher. This is not telling tales but a means of protecting victims.

Raising the awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour by -

- Displaying school's anti-bullying statement¹ in school foyer and other prominent places around the school environment. (What is bullying? What is not bullying? What to do if you feel you are being bullied? What to do if you see somebody else being bullied?)

¹"Bullying is wrong and is not tolerated in Little Flower N.S."

- Engaging in formal teaching within the class setting through SPHE and RE programmes. (school to research materials on identity bullying)
- Creating an annual awareness week for school community about bullying. (The date for this week to be decided at September Staff meeting). This will involve discussion, anti – bullying games, poster/slogan competitions, bullying surveys for classes 3rd-6th.

Other strategies

- Formal programmes of work are a vital element in raising children's self-esteem and equipping children to cope with bullying behaviour e.g. Walk Tall, RSE, Alive-O, Stay safe etc.
- Positive reinforcement by teachers in classroom setting (Golden time, spot prizes, stars, stickers etc.)
- Modelling of respectful behaviour and language by teachers and staff.
- Promotion of extra-curricular activities which encourage co-operation among pupils
- Rewarding incidents of good and improved behaviour and showing acts of kindness at class level and whole school level.
- Encouraging students to look out for each other and to be responsible for their own behaviour.
- All teachers are required to be vigilant on yard duty- record all incidences- monitor repeat offenders
- Immediate affirmation of children who report incidents of bullying which they have witnessed.
- Circle-time sessions, role-play, and Socially Speaking programs are methodologies which are used to discuss and explore issues of bullying.
- Each class to have a set of class rules which complement the school's Code of Behaviour.
 - Renew the signs around the school.
 - Ensure supervision at all times when pupils can access the internet.
 - Teacher's face-book accounts should be private
 - Sanctions for unauthorised use of the internet/electronic devices will be imposed as per the Code of Behaviour.
 - All teachers to do a lesson on internet safety- coincide with Internet Safety Day.
 - To focus on the topic of bullying on at least one school assembly (Nov. of each school year) (as per the recommendations from "Dealing with Bullying in Schools" (office of the ombudsman for children2013).

6. The school's procedure for investigation, follow up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying are as follows:

- Incidents of Bullying will be dealt with on a staged basis.
- **Stage 1**-All reports of bullying must be dealt with initially by the class teacher.
- When a pupil tells a teacher s/he is being bullied, it is important to gather all of the facts from both sides (What, where, when, who, why?). This will involve an **interview** with the alleged bully.
- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best to resolve the situation.
- The aim for the class 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).
- Non teaching staff will be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them to the relevant teacher.
- The teacher should take calm, unemotional, problem-solving approach.
- All sides are listened to separately and notes are taken.
- The notes are brief, factual and should be void of emotional, or judgemental language.
 - Instances are investigated outside the classroom to avoid public humiliations.
 - All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regards to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way.(See *Anti-bullying Procedures for Primary and Post – Primary Schools 6.8.9 page 30-31*)for further suggestions.
 - Where possible, a witness is present.
 - It is explained to the alleged bully how hurtful their behaviour is and attempts are made to encourage them to empathise with the alleged victim.
 - The child/ children involved will be asked to sign "**Pupil Behaviour Promise 1**" (See Appendices)
- **Stage 2**- If this child breaks promise and re-offends then the Deputy Principal or Principal with the class teacher will interview the child/children again. It is explained to them that this is their second time offending and that they have not committed to their promise. Again attempts will be made to resolve the situation. Once more students will sign the "**Pupil Behaviour Promise 2**". This time this has to be signed by their parents. They are now advised that if they break this promise again, they will have a meeting with the principal and their parents in the office and could face suspension.
- Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigations and to assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible.
- Information spoken about should not become available, so that the victim would be further tormented. (Needs to know basis)
- **Stage 3**- If a child breaks their promise twice then the matter is referred to the Principal. The Principal meets with the child and their parent and the child may be suspended for up to 3 days. The Principal has the permission of the Board of Management to suspend for up to 3 days.

Recording of incidents: All incidents will be logged by class teacher and incidents which have not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days will be recorded by the class teacher on the recording template as in Appendix 3 (*Anti bullying Procedures for Primary and Post –Primary Schools*). This template will be completed in full and a copy given to the Deputy Principal and Principal. At least once every school term the Principal will provide a report to the BOM setting out the overall number of bullying cases reported by means of this template and confirmation that all cases are being dealt with in accordance with procedure.

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

- **Victims²**
 - Victims are reassured from the outset that they are **not** to blame.
 - Strategies for restoring self-esteem are explored between teacher and parents/guardians.
 - Where deemed necessary, the child in consultation with parents may be referred for counselling.
 - Staged approach- class support, school support (as per Continuum – Behavioural, Emotional and Social difficulties- NEPS).
 - The parents of the pupils concerned will be advised to contact the local Gardai if appropriate.
- **Bullies**
 - Where deemed necessary, the child in consultation with parents may be referred for counselling. They may need to learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others. Empathy awareness needs to be developed.
 - Clinical referral and assessment may be necessary.
 - Staged approach- class support, school support(as per Continuum – Behavioural, Emotional and Social difficulties- NEPS)
- In certain cases too it may be necessary to invite assistance from formal agencies such as Gardai, Health Board, Local Youth Groups etc.
- The school will constantly remind parents of the dangers of “cyber- bullying” as can happen with the use of social networking sites and mobile phones.

The school cannot be responsible for disagreements between pupils that happen outside the school grounds but will make reasonable efforts to cooperate with parents in assisting them to resolve the issues.

8. Supervision and Monitoring of pupils:

The BOM 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 BOM confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practical 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 Travelling community.

10. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the policy- The evaluation of the policy will happen on both an informal (through teacher observation) and formal basis (use of surveys and questionnaires).

Success Criteria –

- Positive feedback from teachers, parents and pupils
- Well-being and happiness of the whole school community in the light of incidents of bullying behaviour encountered and fewer problems in the yard.
- Increase in numbers of children reporting

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

12. This policy has been made available to school personnel, and provided to the Parent's Association. A copy of the policy will be made available to the Department and patron if requested.

13. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the BOM once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, and provided to the Parent's association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and to the Department.

Signed _____
(Chairperson of the Board of Management)

Signed _____
(Principal)

Date _____

Date _____