



POWERSCOURT 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 Powerscourt 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 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;
 - 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, 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(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 Schools*):
- Class Teacher
 - School Principal
 - Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

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 (see Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):
- There is a school wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.
 - The school staff is vigilant when supervising pupils.
 - The full implementation of the SPHE curriculum.
 - Stay Safe taught every second year. Infants to Sixth.
 - School rules and classroom rules discussed.
 - Pupil's self-esteem promoted. Children are encouraged to report bullying incidents.
 - Worry Box in the 1st-6th class classrooms
 - Children have no access to email, mobiles or social media while at school to eliminate possibility of cyber-bullying within the school.
 - Senior Room pupils complete internet safety lesson
 - Safer internet day
 - Friendship week and friendship stop
 - Buddy system throughout the school
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 (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*) :

The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties.

PROCEDURES FOR NOTING AND REPORTING AN INCIDENT OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

- All reports of bullying, no matter how trivial, will be noted investigated and dealt with by the relevant teachers.
- Serious cases of bullying behaviour should be referred immediately to the Principal.
- Parents or guardians of pupils affected by bullying should be informed by the Principal earlier rather than later of incidents so that they are given the opportunity of discussing the matter. They are then in the position of helping and supporting their children before a crisis occurs.
- Parents / guardians of pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as practicable, the relationship of the parties as soon as possible.
- Parents must be informed of the appropriate person to whom they can make their inquiries regarding incidents of bullying behaviour which they might suspect or that have come to their attention through their children or other parents.

- It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not telling tales but behaving responsibly.
- Individual teachers in consultation with the appropriate staff member should record and take appropriate measure regarding reports of bullying behaviour in accordance with the school's policy and Code of Behaviour and Discipline.
- Non-teaching staff are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the appropriate teaching member of staff.
- In the case of a complaint regarding a staff member, this should normally in the first instance be raised with the staff member in question and if necessary, with the Principal.
- Where cases, relating to either a pupil or teacher remain unresolved at school level, the matter should be referred to the School's Board of Management if not resolved at Board level, refer to the Ombudsman for Children.

PROCEDURES FOR INVESTIGATING AND DEALING WITH BULLYING

- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour 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 gang is involved, each member should be met individually and then the gang should be met as a group. Each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone is clear about what everyone else has said.
- If it is concluded 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 Code of Behaviour and Discipline and try to get him/her to see the situation from the other child's point of view.
- Each member of the gang should be helped to handle the possible pressures that often face them from the other members after interview by the teacher.
- Teachers who are investigating bullying behaviour should keep a written record of their discussions with those involved. It may also be appropriate to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident. It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner.
- In cases where it has been determined that bullying has taken place, meet with the parents or guardians of the two parties involved as appropriate. Explain the actions being taken and the reasons for them, referring them to the school policy. Discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions taken by the school.
- Arrange follow-up meetings with the two parties involved separately.
- All records relating to bullying are stored in a locked filing cabinet.
- The relevant teacher must use the recording template at Appendix 3 in the DES Procedures to record the bullying behaviour in cases where he / she considers that the bullying

behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he / she determined that bullying behaviour occurred.

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*) :

PROGRAMME FOR WORK WITH PUPILS AFFECTED BY BULLYING

Pupils involved in bullying behaviour need assistance on an ongoing basis. For those low in self-esteem opportunities should be developed to increase feelings of self-worth. Pupils who engage in bullying may need counseling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others. Pupils affected by bullying may need counseling and opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem and to develop their friendship and social skills whenever this is needed.

Activities designed to raise self-esteem, develop friendships and social skills and build resilience will form part of the class work.

Research indicates that pupils identified as low achievers academically tend to be more frequently involved in bullying behaviour. The learning strategies applied within the school should allow for the enhancement of the pupil's self-worth.

Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour should be encouraged to discuss them with teachers.

The promotion of relevant home/school/community links is important for the school in regard to countering bullying behaviour and should be encouraged as a normal part of the school's effective operation

EVALUATION OF EFFECTIVENESS OF SCHOOL POLICY ON BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

The anti-bullying policy is subject to continuous review, in the light of incidents of bullying behaviour encountered. It may be included as an item on the agenda for staff meeting

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 20th March 2017.
- 11.** This policy has been made available to school personnel and provided to the PTT. 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 and provided to the PTT. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Date of next review: March 2018