



St Laurence's National School, Chapelizod

Anti-Bullying Policy

February 2015

Introduction

The St. Laurence's school community believes that each pupil has a right to an education free from fear and intimidation.

The school regards bullying as a serious infringement of individual rights and a serious threat to the self-esteem and self-confidence of targeted pupil(s).

Every report of bullying is treated seriously and dealt with, having due regard for the well being of the targeted pupil(s) and the perpetrator(s). The immediate priority, should a bullying incident occur, is ending the bullying and restoring the relationships insofar as is practicable.

All pupils are expected to contribute to the creation and maintenance of a safe environment in school. On becoming aware of a bullying situation, in or outside the school, involving members of the school community they should notify a trusted responsible adult.

Bullying behaviour is too serious not to report.

1. Anti Bullying Policy

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 St. Laurence's N.S. 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. Best Practice - prevention and tackling bullying behaviour

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. What is bullying?

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 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 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. Staff with responsibility for investigating and dealing with bullying

- Miss Leah Byrne
- Ms Vanessa Carty

5. Education and Prevention Strategies

Creation of a culture of "telling".

- Teachers should repeatedly reinforce the message that if anyone is the victim of bullying behavior 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 statement (Bullying is wrong and is not tolerated in St. Laurence's National School. We are a telling school) in school foyer and other prominent places around the school environment.

- Engaging in formal teaching within the class setting through SPHE and RE programmes.
- Creating an annual awareness week for school community about bullying.

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, Follow Me, Webwise and Stay safe.
- Positive reinforcement by teachers in classroom setting (Class dojo, Students of the week, Golden time, spot prizes, stars, stickers etc.)
- Modelling of respectful behaviour and language by teachers and staff.
- Rewarding incidents of good and improved behaviour and showing acts of kindness at class level and whole-school.
- 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, Socially Speaking programs and puppetry are methodologies which are used to discuss and explore issues of bullying.
- Each class to have a set of class rules which are compliment 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 and AUP .
- All teachers to do a lesson on internet safety- coincide with Internet Safety Day.

6. Procedures for Investigation, Follow Up and Recording of Bullying Behaviour

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 using template in Appendices.
- 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".

Stage 2

If this child breaks promise and re-offends then the Deputy Principal or Assistant 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 assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as 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 the parent and the child may be suspended for up to 3 days. The Principal will seek 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. School's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying

Victims

- 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)

Incidents of bullying can extend beyond the school and the journey to and from school is one which can provide particular opportunities for bullying to occur. The school's policy could be given to those who are closely involved at this stage so that if bullying behaviour is witnessed by them, that they may report it to the school.

In certain cases too it may be necessary to invite assistance from formal agencies such as Gardai, (J.L.O) 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. We also direct their attention to the school's internet Acceptable Use Policy (AUP).

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 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. Bullying by Adults

In the case of **intra- staff bullying**, St. Laurence's N.S. will adopt the procedures outlined in Section C (c2) of the I.N.T.O. booklet 'Working Together: Procedures and Policies for Positive Staff Relations.'

In the case of **Teacher- Child bullying**, a complaint should in the first instance be raised with the teacher in question by the parent/ guardian of the child, if possible and then if necessary to the principal. Where it is not possible to agree a framework for resolution, the matter should be referred in writing by both parties to the Board of Management for investigation.

In the case of **Parent- Teacher bullying**, the principal should be informed in the first instance, and if deemed necessary the Board of Management should subsequently be informed in writing.

In the case of **Parent/ Visitor** to the school- Child bullying, the complaint should be referred in the first instance to the child's class teacher and subsequently to the principal if unresolved.

In the case of **Principal- Parent/ Child bullying**, the matter should be raised with the principal if possible, or referred to the Chairperson of the Board of Management.