

Anti Bullying Policy 2024 - 2025

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 Errew 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.

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;
 - 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.

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.

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

- A pupil or parent may bring a bullying concern to the child's class teacher. Individual teachers must take appropriate measures regarding reports of bullying behaviour in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy.
- In these procedures, the member of teaching staff who has responsibility for investigating and dealing with bullying is the class teacher.

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:

- Effective practice includes prevention and awareness raising measures across all aspects of bullying and involves strategies to engage pupils in addressing problems when they arise. In particular, such strategies need to build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils.
- As self-esteem is a major factor in determining behaviour, schools should, through both their curricular and extra-curricular programmes, provide pupils with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth.
- Initiatives and programmes focused on developing pupils' awareness and understanding of bullying, including its causes and effects, should deal explicitly with the issue of identity-based bullying and in particular homophobic and transphobic bullying. For example, teaching the Social, Personal, and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum.
- A school's prevention and awareness raising measures need to be appropriate to the type of bullying and take into account the age and gender of the pupils involved. Each school must work to raise the awareness of bullying so that all members of the school community understand what bullying is and how the school deals with bullying behaviour.
- Teachers can influence attitudes to bullying behaviour in a positive manner through a range of curricular initiatives. There are a number of curriculum components and programmes which are particularly relevant to the prevention of bullying and the promotion of respect for diversity and inclusiveness. The SPHE curriculum makes

specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the inter-related areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships. The Stay Safe programme at primary level, is a personal safety skills programme which seeks to enhance children's self-protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying. The Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) programme provides opportunities to explore and discuss areas such as human sexuality and relationships, which has particular relevance to identity-based bullying. Various other social, health and media education programmes can further help to address the problem of bullying behaviour.

- There is space within the teaching of all subjects to foster an attitude of respect for all: to promote the value of diversity; to address prejudice and stereotyping and to highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour. In English, there is a wide range of literature available which will be used to stimulate discussion. The work could be extended into many other areas such as The Arts; Visual Art, Drama, Wellbeing Education; Religious Education, SPHE and Physical Education. Co-operation and group enterprise can be promoted through inclusive team sports as well as through practical subjects. Sporting activities in particular can provide excellent opportunities for channelling and learning how to control aggression.

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 consistent and clear approach to dealing with bullying when it occurs is essential to effective practice. A pupil or parent may bring a bullying concern to any teacher in the school. Individual teachers must take appropriate measures regarding reports of bullying behaviour in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy.
- The primary aim for the relevant 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);
- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
- All reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly;
- Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.
- Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation 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;
- It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset;
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents;

- Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved; this may not always be possible.
- All interviews should 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;
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should 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 group is involved, each member may be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about others' statements;
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher;
- It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s);
- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved should 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 should 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 child;
- Where the relevant teacher has determined 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 school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;
- It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil involved, his or her parents and the school;
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should 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. This can have a therapeutic effect;
- In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded by the relevant teacher;
- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:
 - -Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
 - -Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
 - -Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable; and
 - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal or Assistant Principal;

- Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures;
- In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their right to make a Complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Procedures for recording bullying behaviour

- While all reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher will use his/her professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same. If it is 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.
- The relevant teacher must use record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:
 - in cases where he/she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred; and
 - 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.

In each of the circumstances above, the record must be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable. It should also be noted that the timeline for recording bullying behaviour does not in any way preclude the relevant teacher from consulting the Principal or Deputy Principal at an earlier stage in relation to a case.

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

- A programme of support for pupils who have been bullied by offering them an immediate opportunity to talk about their experience with their teacher or other teacher along with continuing support if necessary. The person who has been bullied will be assured that the school community will support them. The school will also inform the parents of the person who has been bullied of the incidents that have occurred to further support the person who has been bullied.
- Such pupils may need counselling and/or opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed. Errew NS strives to achieve this through our S.P.H.E. lessons, Circle Time, Stay Safe and the Walk Tall Programme.
- A programme of support for those pupils involved in bullying behaviour must also be part of the school's intervention process. Pupils involved in bullying behaviour need assistance on an ongoing basis. For those with low self-esteem, opportunities should be developed to increase feelings of self-worth. It is, therefore, important that the learning strategies applied within the school allow for the enhancement of the pupil's

self-worth. This will include speaking with them to discover why they became involved in bullying behaviour, informing their parents/guardians and continue to work with them in order to modify their behaviour.

- Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others. Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour should be encouraged to discuss them with teachers.
- Details of the school's programme for working with pupils affected by bullying are set out in the school's anti-bullying policy.
- Errew School will review the Anti-Bullying Policy regularly while the Board of Management will review the policy annually.

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.

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.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published or is readily accessible to parents and pupils on request and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

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, is readily accessible to parents and pupils on request and provided to the Parents' Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department of Education.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _____

Date: _____

(Principal)

Date of next review: September 2025