

## Anti-Bullying Policy

Clooney National School

### ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

#### Introductory Statement:

Cognisant of the values as expressed by BOM, staff, visiting teachers, parents and the wider school community, this policy was formulated by the staff of Clooney NS.

The DES guidelines, 'Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools', September 2013, were followed.

#### Principles:

The school is committed to the following key principles for both preventing and tackling bullying:

- A positive school culture and climate that is welcoming, respectful and inclusive
- Effective leadership
- A school-wide approach
- A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact
- Effective supervision of and monitoring of pupils
- Supports for staff
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy
- Implementation of Education and Prevention Strategies (including awareness raising measures)

#### Rationale:

- To raise awareness of Bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents/guardians.
- To create a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To devise School based measures to prevent and deal with Bullying Behaviour.
- To increase the awareness of Bullying Behaviour in the school community.
- To provide the highest possible standard of Education for all pupils in a stable and secure learning environment.

#### Aims:

The school aims to foster in the child a sense of care and respect for himself/herself and others and an appreciation of the dignity of every human being. The teachers aim to provide an environment for the children which is safe and in which they can realize their true potential.

Our school cherishes all pupils equally and wishes to create a harmonious environment where a spirit of mutual respect is promoted. The schools anti bullying policy will have

a nurturing potential, which reflects the Christian values promoted within the school.

Co-Operation between staff, parents and pupils is encouraged and the anti-bullying policy reflects the recognition of the dignity and value of each person made in the image & likeness of God.

For our understanding of what is meant by bullying see process section of folder.

### What is Bullying?

Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person/persons and which is repeated over time. This includes cyber bullying and identity based bullying including, in particular homophobic and transphobic bullying.

Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, which should not be condoned, can scarcely be described as Bullying. However, when the behaviour is systematic and ongoing it is bullying. Any person can be a victim of, or perpetrator of bullying.

### Why do children Bully?

It is generally accepted that bullying is a learned behaviour. Pupils who Bully tend to display aggressive attitudes combined with a low level of self-esteem.

Children become bullies for many reasons. Some of the reasons are:

- They may feel insecure or inadequate.
- They may be bullied by parents or older children at home.
- They may find it difficult to fit in with other children.
- They may feel they must succeed at all costs.
- They may be very spoilt and go totally unchallenged at home.
- They may be constantly humiliated by others and in turn do this to other children.
- They may be physically, sexually or emotionally abused themselves.

### Where can Bullying happen?

Bullying can take place anywhere:

- In school, in class, in the playground.
- On the way to or from school.
- On the road/in the home etc.

Note: Factors having their origins in differences or conflicts between parties outside the school may contribute to increased incident of bullying within the school.

### Types of Bullying:

### 1. Extortion

Demand for money may be made, often accompanied by threats (sometimes carried out) in the event of the victim not promptly "paying up". Victims' lunches or money may be taken or demanded. Victims may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to the bully. Sometimes this tactic is used with the sole purpose of incriminating the victim.

### 2. Intimidation.

Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation. It is based on the use of very aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon.

Particularly upsetting to victims can be the so-called "look" - a facial expression which conveys aggression, dislike or contempt.

### 3. Isolation.

This form of bullying behaviour seems to be more prevalent among girls. A certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or the entire class or peer group.

### 4. Name Calling.

Persistent name - calling directed at the same individual(s), which hurts, insults or humiliates should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Most name - calling of this type refers to physical appearance, e.g. "big ears", size or clothes worn. Mimicking of distinctive voice characteristics may attract negative attention.

Academic ability can also provoke name-calling. This tends to operate at two extremes.

First, there are those who are singled out for attention because they are perceived to be slow, or weak, academically. These pupils are often referred to as "dummies", "dopes", or "donkeys".

At the other extreme are those who, because they are perceived as high achievers, are labelled "swots", "brain boxes", "licks", "teacher's pet" etc.

### 5. Slagging.

This behaviour usually refers to the good-natured banter which goes on as part of normal social interchange between people. However, **when this slagging extends to very personal remarks aimed again and again at the one individual or family about appearance, clothing, personal hygiene or involves references of an uncomplimentary nature to member's of one family, then it assumes the form of bullying.** Suggestive remarks about pupil's sexual orientation can also be classified as bullying.

### 6. Malicious Rumours.

Spreading malicious rumours about a person is also a form of bullying.

### 7. Physical Aggression.

This behaviour is more common among boys than girls. It included pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people up. It may also take the form of severe

physical assault. While the boys commonly engage in "mess fights" these can often be used as a disguise for physical harassment of inflicting pain.

#### 8. Damage to Property.

Personal property can be the focus of attention for the bully. This may result in damage to clothing, schoolbooks and other learning items. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.

#### 9. Bullying of School Personnel.

Bullying of school personnel by means of:

1. Verbal abuse.
2. Damage to property.
3. Threats.
4. Physical assault..

#### 10. Cyber-Bullying

Cyber-bullying takes place online. This bullying can take place on social media platforms and occurs outside of school hours. The impact of cyber-bullying can then become evident in school.

### **INDICATIONS OF BULLYING/BEHAVIOUR - SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS.**

The following signs/symptoms may suggest that a child is being bullied.

- Anxiety about travelling to and from school, requesting parents to drive and collect them, changing route of travel, avoiding regular times for travelling to and from school.
- Fear of going out to yard.
- Unwillingness to go to school, refusal to attend, particularly among older children.
- Deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school.
- Pattern of physical illness e.g. headaches, stomach aches.
- Unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour. These may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after school holidays.
- Visible signs of anxiety or distress, stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, crying, not eating, bed wetting etc.
- Spontaneous out of character comments

- Possessions missing or damaged.
- Increased requests for money or stealing money, (to meet extortion demands).
- Unexplained bruising or cuts or damaged clothing.
- Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling him/her.
- Becoming isolated in the class.
- Unexplained absences.
- May begin to bully other smaller children.

These signs do not necessarily mean that a child is being bullied.

They can also be indicative of other problems. If repeated or occurring in combination these signs do warrant investigation in order to establish what is affecting the child.

### **Dealing with Bullying Behaviour.**

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

It is recognised that bullying behaviour is not confined to schools. It is prevalent in society, in the workplace and in the home. To counteract bullying behaviour, it is important that all involved with children have an understanding of the factors which give rise to bullying. A high degree of collective vigilance is needed throughout the local community, the school, and other agencies and by parents if bullying behaviour is to be identified and dealt with in a fair and equitable manner.

While recognising and accepting that a community approach is essential in dealing with bullying, we also recognise that the school is in a unique position to promote attitudes and to shape patterns of behaviour, which are positive and caring. Our code of discipline and school rules states that the school should provide an environment where the child is physically safe and happy and where good relationships are fostered between pupils, teachers, parents/guardians and other involved in the running of the school.

In accordance with this:

- The school recognises the need for teachers and parents/guardians to communicate and co-operate with each other to maintain good relationships and gives good example within the school community.
- The school recognises the responsibility of parents and teachers to share in the task of equipping their children with a range of skills, which help them in their dealing with others.

- The school acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual and his/her worth as a human being. It therefore aims to foster self - respect and self discipline in the child. Respect for and courtesy towards each other is encouraged and an awareness of the inter dependence of the group/school community is fostered as evidenced in our school motto 'Ar Scáth a Cheile a Mhairimid'.
- The school acknowledges the right of each child to enjoy school in a secure environment. It therefore promotes qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding amongst the children both in school and out of school.
- The school aims to take particular care of all pupils and to respond to their needs, fears or anxieties.

### **Prevention Strategies**

1. Circle time and class discussion on rights of individual - fairness etc.
2. Religion class, respect for others.
3. Posters, leaflets, Role -play from time to time as appropriate.
4. Monitor new pupils as to how they are settling in.
5. Teacher, parents and other pupils, be watchful.
6. Encourage 'victim' or other pupils to tell' as early as possible. Every effort will be made to deal with concerns in confidence/and with sensitivity where possible.
7. Work on building self-esteem of pupils in S.P.H.E., Walk Tall, Bí Folláin, Stay Safe etc.
8. Encourage a friendly atmosphere between pupil/pupil and pupil/teacher.
9. Advise pupils that a joke is no longer a joke when the other person gets annoyed.

### **School Procedure - (see Code of Discipline).**

A school wide approach is important, where management, staff, parents and pupils have a role and responsibility in helping prevent and address school-based bullying and any negative impact from bullying behaviour that occurs elsewhere.

Since the failure to report bullying can lead to a continuation or deterioration of bullying, the school and parents encourage children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour. This can be with the class teacher, the teacher on duty at the time, the principal or other staff members. This is a "telling school" as defined in Stay Safe Programme. Children will therefore be constantly assured that their reports of bullying either for themselves or peers will be treated with sensitivity.

Repeated incidents of bullying behaviour will be noted by the class teacher or teacher on duty/yard duty.

Incidents will be investigated - what, who, when, where, why? will help here.

Serious incidents/persistent problems will be reported to the Principal.

If a gang is involved, they will be met both individually and as a group.

Each member will be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone is clear about what everyone else has said. This account may be written or oral.

Pupils who are directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way, and will be expected to assist in the investigation.

Children should understand that there are no innocent bystanders where bullying is concerned

The "bully" will be asked to reflect on his/her behaviour and its Consequences for himself/herself and for the person who is the victim.

Parents of the parties involved will be contacted to inform them of the matter and to explain the actions being taken.

The situation will continue to be monitored to ensure that the problem has been resolved.

The relevant teacher will keep appropriate written records to assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and to restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

A standard recording template will be used should the teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately or appropriately addressed within 20 days after he/she determined the bullying occurred

Where cases remain unresolved at school level the matter should be referred to the School's Board of Management. If it is not resolved at Board level the matter may be referred to the Department of Education.

## 2. Parents/Guardians Role.

### What can be done if your child is bullied?

- It is important to be realistic, it will not be possible for a single child to assert his/her rights if attacked by a gang. Children should be advised to get away and tell in situations such as this. Tell them that you would have done the same in such a situation.

- Teaching your child to say "No" in a good assertive tone of voice and to carry him/her self in a confident way will help your child to deal with many situations. A child's self-image and body language may send out messages to potential bullies.

- Children should be encouraged to talk about bullying and given an opportunity to express their concerns, e.g. circle time.

- Approach your child's teacher if the bullying is school related. It is important for you to understand that bullying in school can be difficult for teachers to detect because of the large numbers of children involved. Teachers will appreciate bullying being brought

to light. School bullying requires that parents and teachers work together for a resolution.

•Very often parental advice to a child is to "hit back" at the bully if the abuse is physical. This is not always realistic as it requires a huge amount of courage and indeed sometimes makes the situation worse. Children should not be encouraged to engage in violent behaviour. In school children are not allowed HIT BACK. Teaching children to be more assertive and to tell is far more positive and effective.

### **What if your child is a bully?**

1. Don't panic. This may be a temporary response to something in the child's life e.g. a new baby, a death in the family, a difficult home problem etc. Give your child an opportunity to talk about anything that could be upsetting him/her.
2. Don't punish bullying by being a bully yourself. Hitting and verbal attack will make the situation worse. Talk to your child and try to find out if there is a problem. Explain how the victim felt. Try to get the child to understand the victim's point of view. This would need to be done over time.
3. Bullies often suffer from poor self-esteem. Use every opportunity you can to praise good, considerate, helpful behaviour. Don't only look for negatives.
4. Talk to the child's teacher and find out more about the child's school behaviour. Enlist the teacher's help in dealing with this. It is important that you both take the same approach.

### **Success Criteria**

The success of this policy will be assessed through observation of behaviour in classrooms, corridors and on the yard. Constant feedback from staff, pupils, parents and the school community will also be important in assessing the policy.

### **Roles & Responsibility**

The class teacher, principal teacher and special education teacher will have responsibility for ensuring that this policy is implemented. The principal teacher will have responsibility for co-ordinating and monitoring the implementation of this policy.

The principal will report to the Board of Management, at every meeting, setting out any number of bullying cases reported. The report will also provide confirmation that all these cases are either ongoing, have been dealt with or are unresolved.

The B.O.M. will undertake an annual review of the Anti-Bullying Policy.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_