



Anti-bullying Policy

Greenmount N.S.

Scoil Mhuire na nGrás



School Position on Bullying

The Greenmount 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). Therefore it does not tolerate bullying of any kind.

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).

All staff are part of our 'Anti-Bullying Team' and are responsible for cultivating an environment free from bullying.

The immediate priority, should a bullying incident occur, is ending the bullying, (*thereby protecting the person(s) being targeted*) and resolving the issues and restoring the relationships involved insofar as is practicable using a “Reform, not Blame” approach.

All pupils are expected to contribute to the creation and maintenance of a safe environment in the school. On becoming aware of any 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.

Pupils’ participation in school life in general is encouraged through existing school structures. Awareness of bullying, and willingness to take action to prevent or stop it, is part of this participation.

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 (National Educational Welfare Board), the Board of Management of Greenmount 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. 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
 - 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 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.

This definition includes a wide range of behaviour, whether verbal or written, whether physical or social, whether targeting person or property, whether carried out directly or indirectly or through any electronic or other medium, which could harm a pupil or undermine her/his self-esteem or self-confidence.

Appendix 1 gives a list of specific examples of bullying behaviour. This list is not exhaustive.

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. In accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*, “*At primary level, the relevant teacher will normally be the class teacher.*” Procedures (6.8.3).
5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity based bullying) used by the school are as follows:
 - The anti-bullying module of the Social, Personal, Health Education Programme, School Completion Internet Safety Workshops, the Walk Tall Programme, the Stay Safe Programme, Relationships and Sexuality Education lessons, Zippy’s Friends, etc.) as it applies during each school year.
 - From 2nd-6th class, at least five awareness-raising exercises per school year for each class group from **Appendix 2** (e.g. from the “*Awareness-Raising*” strand of the *Anti-Bullying Campaign*, via its website), pro-actively explaining the nature and variety, causes, consequences and unacceptability of bullying. From Infants to 1st Class, awareness raising will take place using The SPHE Programme, Zippy’s Friends and the Stay Safe Programme, etc.
 - Pupils are helped to examine the issue of bullying in a calm rational way, outside of the tense context of particular bullying incidents. In the process they are made more aware of the nature of bullying and the various forms that it can take.
 - Pupils are made aware that the consequences of bullying behaviour are always bad for those who are targeted, even if this is not always obvious at the time.
 - Pupils are encouraged to recognise, reject and report bullying behaviour, either spontaneously or through questionnaires that are regularly used in the school.

Through presentations or other exercises, the school staff and parents/guardians are made aware of the nature of bullying and the signs that might indicate that a pupil is being bullied. They are encouraged to be vigilant in watching out for signs of bullying and to report any suspicion of bullying they may have to the pupil’s Class Teacher (in the case of staff members) or any staff member (in the case of parents/guardians).

Through regular reports in school newsletters and other communications as well as at meetings with parent/guardian groups parents/guardians are regularly informed of the activities of the School’s Anti-Bullying Campaign and encouraged to support its work.

- An Anti-Bullying slogan competition (focus on being a good friend) will be held in Term 1.
 - A whole school friendship/manners week will be held in Term 2.
 - An Anti-Bullying art competition will be held in Term 3.
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, **Appendix 3** (e.g. the six step approach available from the “*Dealing with Incidents*” section of the *Anti-Bullying Campaign* website) are as follows:

1. If the 'Relevant Class Teacher' receives a verbal report of bullying or a written report from another staff member (**Appendix 4**), they investigate all incidents of suspected bullying behaviour, whether these take place within the school or outside it, with a view to establishing the facts and bringing any such behaviour to an end.
2. The 'Relevant Class Teacher' will liaise with their assigned Special Educational Needs teacher to organise a class bullying survey (**Appendix 5**) for the relevant class level. The school reserves the right to ask any pupil to write an account of what happened, as part of an investigation. This will be a standard procedure and does not necessarily imply that a pupil is guilty of misbehaviour.
3. Pupils who are alleged to have been involved in bullying behaviour are interviewed by the 'Relevant Class Teacher' to establish the nature and extent of the behaviour and any reasons for it. The teacher will use the "Alleged Bullying Interview" (**Appendix 6**) and the "Bullying Behaviour Checklist" (**Appendix 7**). In the event that they have been involved in bullying behaviour they are asked to sign a binding promise (**Appendix 8**) that they will treat all pupils fairly, equally and respectfully including the targeted pupil(s).
4. The 'Relevant Class Teacher' does not apportion blame but rather treats bullying behaviour as a "mistake" that can and must be remedied. S/he emphasises that the intention is not to punish perpetrators but to talk to them, to explain how harmful and hurtful bullying is and to seek a promise that it will stop. If that promise is forthcoming and is honoured there will be no penalty and that will be the end of the matter. Pupils who report bullying therefore are not getting others "in trouble" so much as enabling them to get out of trouble into which they may ultimately get if the bullying continued.
5. When an investigation is completed and/or a bullying situation is resolved the 'Relevant Class Teacher' will complete a record (**reverse of Appendix 4**), to include the findings of the investigation, the strategy adopted and the outcome of the intervention, as well as any other relevant information.
6. If a pupil has signed such a promise but then chooses to break that promise and continue the bullying behaviour, this can then no longer be considered a "mistake." In this event parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed and requested to countersign their daughter/son's promise. Breach of this additional promise by further bullying behaviour is regarded as a very grave matter and a serious sanction may be imposed by the school authorities (See sanctions below).

- **Sanctions:**

Where a pupil has been found to be engaged in bullying behaviour, has formally promised to stop and has broken that promise, any of the following sanctions may be imposed:

- S/he may be required to sign another promise, this time countersigned by a parent/guardian;
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) may be contacted by the 'Relevant Class Teacher' and informed of the nature and extent of the bullying behaviour with a view to agreeing a strategy whereby a promise to end the bullying behaviour would be honoured;
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) may be invited to a meeting with the 'Relevant Class Teacher' and the Principal and the pupil may be dealt with under the School's Code of Behaviour.

- The case may be referred to the Board of Management and the pupil may be suspended/expelled from the school.

Recording of bullying behaviour

All documentation regarding bullying incidents (**Appendix 4**) and their resolution is retained securely in the school in the bullying pupils class file.

It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner.

The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

Informal- pre-determination that bullying has occurred

- Any staff member who is suspicious that they witnessed a bullying incident/behaviour should complete an **Incident Report Form (Appendix 4)** and return it to the relevant Class Teacher. The relevant Class Teacher must keep these Incident Report Forms for any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. These forms must be kept securely in the relevant pupils file. These reports are then sent to a central Anti-bullying file in the Principal's Office each June to allow each child a clean slate for the new academic year.
- While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant Class Teacher, the relevant teacher must keep a written record of the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same on the reverse of the Incident Report Form.
- The relevant teacher must inform the principal of all incidents being investigated. The Principal is not required to become involved at this early stage of the process.

Formal Stage 1-determination that bullying has occurred

- If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must keep appropriate written records (**Appendix 4**) which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

Formal Stage 2-Appendix 3 (From DES Procedures)

- The relevant teacher must use the recording template at **Appendix 9** to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstance:

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 (if an Appendix 5 is completed, it will be noted at the next Board of Management meeting. Individual pupil names will not be noted)

When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and the principal in an Anti-Bullying Folder.

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

- **Bullied pupils:**
 - Ending the bullying behaviour.
 - Promoting a school culture to foster more respect for bullied pupils and all pupils.
 - Promoting a school culture that fosters greater empathy towards and support for bullied pupils.
 - Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the awareness-raising programme.
 - Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the speedy identification of those responsible and speedy resolution of bullying situations.
 - After resolution, enabling bullied pupils to complete a reflection statement if it is deemed necessary.
 - Making adequate staff support available to pupils who need it in a timely manner, e.g. brief Learning Support, Social Skills group, link with School Completion Programme, etc.
 - Helping bullied pupils raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills (e.g. School clubs, the Chill out room, a role or responsibility in school, participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school).
 - Staged approach - class support, school support (as per Continuum-Behavioural, Emotional and Social difficulties – NEPS: National Educational Psychology Services).
- **Bullying pupils:**
 - Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are not blamed or punished and get a “clean sheet.”
 - Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are doing the right and honorable thing and giving them praise for this.
 - Making adequate staff support available to pupils who need it in a timely manner, e.g. brief Learning Support, Social Skills group, link with School Completion Programme, etc.
 - Helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills (e.g. School clubs, the Chill out room, a role or responsibility in school, participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school).
 - Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils’ feelings of self-worth.
 - In dealing with negative behaviour in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child.
 - In dealing with bullying behaviour seeking resolution and offering a fresh start with a “clean sheet” and no blame in return for keeping a promise to reform.
 - Staged approach - class support, school support (as per Continuum - Behavioural, Emotional and Social difficulties - NEPS: National Educational Psychological Service).

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. The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps as 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.

The Board of Management recognise that all pupils, in particular senior pupils, can be seen as a resource to assist in countering bullying. Non-teaching staff should also contribute and be part of the process to counter bullying behaviour in schools. The Board of Management recognise that school strategies and measures need the assistance of all parents (e.g. Ref. Section 6 Part 4 of Policy), to be successful.

The Board of Management must ensure that members of school staff have sufficient familiarity with the school's anti bullying policy to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy when required. The Board of Management must also make appropriate arrangements to ensure that temporary and substitute staff have sufficient awareness of the school's Code of Behaviour and its Anti-Bullying Policy.

If an Appendix 5 is completed by a teacher, it will be noted at the next relevant Board of Management meeting. Individual pupil names will not be noted. The Board of Management will seek confirmation that all cases noted using Appendix 5 above have been or are being dealt with in accordance with the school's Anti-bullying Policy and the *AntiBullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools*.

10. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 10th June 2014.
11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills and to 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, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills and to the patron if requested.