



Anti-Bullying Policy

Anti-Bullying Policy of Tramore Educate Together National School

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 Tramore Educate Together 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.

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 behavior:

- 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 behavior 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 behavior (including use of established intervention strategies); and
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

Definition of Bullying

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 behavior 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 behavior, 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 behavior.

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*.

Procedures to Prevent Bullying

1. **The relevant teachers** for investigating and dealing with bullying are the class teacher and/or the principal.
2. **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 SPHE programme as it applies during each school year,
 - Awareness-raising exercises during September for each class group (*e.g. for Infants, 1st & 2nd class school-designed resources; for 3rd – 6th class 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.
 - School staff and parents/guardians are encouraged to be vigilant and are made aware of the nature of bullying and the signs that might indicate that a pupil is being bullied.
 - An annual anti-bullying/friendship day/week.
 - Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra- curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers.
 - Involvement of the student council (when established) in contributing to a safe school environment *e.g.* Buddy system, Lunchtime Pals and other student support activities.
3. **The school’s procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying** are as follows:
 - The relevant teacher investigates all instances of reported or suspected bullying behaviour.
 - Pupils who are alleged to have been involved in bullying behaviour are interviewed by the relevant teacher.
 - Parents will be involved at an early stage, if it is established that bullying has occurred.
 - The relevant teacher will keep a written report, to include the findings of the investigation, the plan of action on how to resolve the issues within the next 20 school days and the outcome of the intervention, as well as any other relevant information.
 - The relevant teacher will determine whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed by taking into account
 - whether the bullying behaviour has ceased,
 - whether the issues are resolved and
 - whether, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved have been restored.
 - Teachers will inform the principal of all incidents of bullying.
 - If it is deemed necessary that sanctions be implemented, the relevant teacher shall refer to the school’s Code of Behaviour.
 - A behaviour plan is implemented for the child who has been deemed to be bullying. The aim of this is to reward positive behaviour and to encourage the child to make positive choices in his/her behaviour towards other children. A trusted adult can act as a mentor to encourage positive behaviour in this child in the future.
 - in relation to bullying in schools, [*Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011 \(Children First\)*](#) and the [*Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*](#) provide that in situations where “the incident is

serious and where the behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive, the school must consult the HSE Children and Family Social Services with a view to drawing up an appropriate response, such as a management plan”.

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.

4. **The school’s programme of support** recognises that bullying affects the victim, the person who is doing the bullying and the person who witnesses bullying.

Support for the child who has been bullied

Support in the form of a trusted adult to speak to daily is offered to the child who has been bullied for as long as this is deemed necessary.

Self-esteem building exercises and opportunities to increase feelings of self-worth will be undertaken with the child who has been bullied in order to restore their self-esteem.

Where appropriate or necessary friendship groups or a buddy system will be implemented for the child for yard times.

If it is deemed appropriate the child will be offered concrete support in how to deal with a similar situation in the future i.e. given the language tools to react and seek help immediately. This can be practised with role play and drama. This is particularly useful for children with Special Educational Needs who may lack the necessary verbal and/or non-verbal skills to do so. The teacher, with the support of the SEN team will offer this support.

Support for the child who has deemed to be engaging in bullying behaviour

The child who has been engaging in bullying behaviour will be offered concrete support in changing her/his behaviour. This can involve self-esteem building exercises and opportunities to increase feelings of self-worth. This child may also be given the opportunity to speak to a trusted adult on a regular basis to encourage her/him to continue to make positive behaviour choices.

Where deemed appropriate follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved may be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing both sides together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable. This can have a therapeutic effect.

Support for the child who has witnessed bullying behaviour

The child who has witnessed bullying behaviour will be offered concrete support if necessary, by being given the opportunity to speak to a trusted adult on a regular basis to help him/her process what s/he has witnessed. Children who make an initial report on what is later deemed to be bullying behaviour will be praised. The importance of the bystander will be highlighted.

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.

Ratification and Review

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year (Appendix 4). Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel and parents on request. 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.

This policy has been made available to school personnel and published on the school website. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills and to the patron if requested.

