

# Anti-Bullying Policy Fossa National School

## (Draft)

1. 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 Fossa National School 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.

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) 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.

**(b) Effective leadership**

**(c) A school-wide approach**

**(d) A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact**

**(e) 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;

**(f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils**

**(g) Supports for staff**

**(h) Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and**

**(i) On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.**

**Definition of 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:

- **Physical aggression:** This behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While pupils often engage in ‘mess fights’, they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain
- **Intimidation:** Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation: it may be based on the use of very aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon. Particularly upsetting can be a facial expression which conveys aggression and/or dislike.
- **Extortion:** Demands for money may be made, often accompanied by threats (sometimes carried out in the event of the targeted pupil not delivering on the demand). A pupil may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to another who is engaged in bullying behaviour.
- **Isolation/deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other relational bullying:** This occurs where a certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or all of the class group. This practice is usually initiated by the person engaged in bullying behaviour and can be difficult to detect. It may be accompanied by writing insulting remarks about the pupil in public places, by passing around notes about or drawings of the pupil or by whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard. Relational bullying occurs when a person’s attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. One of the most common forms includes control: “Do this or I won’t be your friend anymore”(implied or stated); a group ganging up against one person (girl or boy); non-verbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumours about a person or giving them the “silent treatment”.

- **Name calling:** Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) who hurts insults or humiliates should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name-calling of this type refers to physical appearance, e.g., size or clothes worn. Accent or distinctive voice characteristics may attract negative attention. Academic ability can also provoke name calling. This tends to operate at two extremes. There are those who are singled out for attention because they are perceived to be weak academically. At the other extreme there are those who, because they are perceived as high achievers, are also targeted.
- **Damage to property:** Personal property can be the focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, school books and other learning material or interference with a pupil's locker or bicycle. 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.
- **Cyber-bullying:** This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, e-mail, instant messaging (IM), apps, gaming sites, chat-rooms and other online technologies. Being the target of inappropriate or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying. As cyber-bullying uses technology to perpetrate bullying behaviour and does not require face to face contact, cyber-bullying can occur at any time (day or night). Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyber-bullying. For example, a target may be sent homophobic text messages or pictures may be posted with negative comments about a person's sexuality, appearance etc.
- **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.**

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

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 relevant teacher responsible for investigating and dealing with/resolving bullying incidents will be the class teacher or class teachers of the pupils involved.

The relevant teacher or teachers should keep the principal teacher/ deputy principal informed of incidents and of progress being made to resolve these.

Where the relevant teacher is concerned that the gravity of the situation warrants immediate action from the principal, he/she should initially consult with the principal/deputy principal.

If it is agreed that the seriousness of the bullying behaviour warrants it, the principal/deputy principal will assume the role of relevant teacher to investigate the bullying behaviour.

**4. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber- bullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the Fossa School are as follows:**

- School-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community
  
- The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Pupils will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.
- Whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develops an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it-prevention and intervention.

- 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. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.
- Buddy system, mentoring, Lunchtime Pals and other student support activities that can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school-to is included in School Booklet and displayed publicly in classrooms and in common areas of the school.
- The school’s anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parent(s)/guardian(s) are made aware that it is available to view or download on the school website .
- Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. 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.
- Identify clear protocols to encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied. The protocol should be developed in consultation with parents.
- The development of an Acceptable Use Policy in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored.

### **Implementation of curricula**

- The full implementation of the SPHE and CSPE curricula and the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes at primary and post- primary level. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardai, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying
- The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.
- The school will implement the advice in “Sexual Orientation advice for schools” (RSE Primary, see booklet).

### **Links to other policies**

- List school policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to bullying, e.g. Code of Behaviour, Child Protections policy, Supervision of pupils, Acceptable Use policy, Attendance, Sporting activities.

•

5. **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 :**

## **Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying**

**Procedures re Bullying Behaviour:** 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:

### **The School Recognises that:**

- early intervention is crucial;
- a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach should be adopted;
- incidents are best investigated outside the classroom situation;
- humiliation of victim or bully should be avoided at all costs;
- interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned;
- other pupils can sometimes provide useful information;
- dealing effectively with conflict in a non-aggressive manner is setting an example for pupils;
- parental input and co-operation is valuable;
- both victim and bully need help.

### **Investigation of Bullying:**

- All interviews will take place outside the classroom situation with due regard to child protection measures e.g. door to office/room will be left open.
- A written record of discussions will be kept (see Appendix 4; Incident record Sheet) and the pupil may be asked to give his own written account, if this is appropriate.
- If a group is involved, pupils will be interviewed individually and then the group will be met together, where each will be asked to give his account. Each member of a group will be helped to handle the possible pressures that often face them from other members after interview by teacher/Principal.
- If it is concluded that a pupil has engaged in bullying behavior, it will be made clear to him that he is in breach of the schools Code of Behaviour and Discipline.
- Efforts will be made to assist the pupil in seeing the situation from the victim's point of view.

- In cases where bullying behaviour has occurred, parents/guardians of the two parties involved will be contacted. They will be referred to this school policy. Action being taken and the reason for it will be explained to them and ways in which they can reinforce or support the school action will be explored.

### **Follow Up:**

- Follow-up contact with the two parties may be organised to take place within one month of the investigation. The possible therapeutic effect of a bringing together of victim and bully at a future date will be considered if the victim is ready and agreeable to do so.
- Following any incident of bullying, the school recognises that issues relating to the prevention of bullying may need to be examined. This will involve exploration of suitable programmes with victims, bullies and their peers. Whole school focus or specific class lessons may need to be revised dealing with respect, self-esteem, aggression or the issue of bullying itself.
- If, during the course of the investigation, there are child protection concerns, the Children First 2011 guidelines become relevant as does the schools Child Protection Policy.
- Information re any past Bullying issues will be passed on to new teacher at the start of each year.
- Where the school feels an individual needs specific support from outside agencies, a referral to NEPS will be considered.
- The effectiveness of this school policy will be assessed regularly with regard to the level and type of bullying behaviour that may be happening in the school. Amendments will be made to reflect any change in approach deemed necessary.

### **Recording of Bullying Behaviour:**

- Where a bullying investigation has been carried out the class teacher will keep a written record of the incident (see Appendix 4.)
- Where the principal has used the Bullying Incident Investigation Record Form (see Appendix 3), a copy will be kept in the office along with his/her own records of the investigation.

(see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):



## **6. Programme of Support for Pupils:**

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

- The relevant teacher will endeavour to assure the child that they are the victim and that they did the right thing by telling.
- The teacher will monitor the situation in the period after the bullying incident/s and regularly check with the child/children to see how things are going.
- The Principal will follow up by checking in regularly on how the situation has developed.
- Information re any past Bullying issues will be passed on to new teacher at the start of each year.
  
- All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience e.g.
  - Buddy / Peer mentoring system
  - Group work such as circle time
- If pupils require counselling of further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.
- Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.
- (see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):

---

## **7. 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. (see Supervision Policy)

**8.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. Adoption Date of Policy:** This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on .....

**11. Availability of Policy:** This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and a hard copy is readily accessible to parents and pupils on request. It has been provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

**12. Review of Policy:** 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, if requested, to the patron and the Department. The Principal is required to report to the BoM once a term as to the number, if any, of reports that have been **in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore**, compiled and whether the matter has been resolved in accordance with this Policy.

**13. List of Appedices:**

- Appendix 1: Fossa NS Anti-Bullying Charter
- Appendix 2: Practical Tips for Building a Positive School Culture & Climate
- Appendix 3: Bullying Incident Investigation Form
- Appendix 4: Incident Record Sheet
- Appendix 5: Checklist for Annual Review of the Anti-Bullying Policy & it's implementation

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Principal)

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

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Chairperson of Board of Management) Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of next review: \_\_\_\_\_





