

# Anti-Bullying Policy: Gorey Educate Together N.S., April 2014 / Updated May 2020

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*The school engaged with The Sticks and Stones anti-bullying programme in 2014 and the services of the Anti-Bullying Centre, Dublin City University in 2017 and 2020. Workshops were delivered to pupils (4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup>) and staff. ABC Facilitator, Helena Murphy, reviewed our existing anti-bullying policy in 2020, in consultation with the in-school management team.*

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 Gorey 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.

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 including in particular, homophobic and trans-phobic 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 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*.

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows: (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

The Relevant Teachers in this school are:

1. All Class teachers
2. Special Duties Teacher & Principal (shared caseload)

**Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.**

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying, homophobic and trans-phobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows (see Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

#### **School-wide approach**

- A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.
- Gorey Educate Together promotes educating our children to the fact that diversity is a 'normal' part of life.
- 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 develop an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it – 'prevention and intervention.'
- School wide awareness-raising (including school assemblies, displays & newsletters) on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community. (The school's anti-bullying policy is published on the school website and referred to in school newsletters.)
- 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 to report issues to relevant teachers.
- Involvement of our older pupils in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. buddy system, mentoring, and other student support activities that can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- 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.
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and 'how to tell.'
- The school will follow up reports of cyber-bullying between pupils in the school and also reports from cyber-victims whose perpetrators belong to another school by contacting the school concerned in order to resolve the issue. However, where the perpetrator belongs to another school, our dependence is on the other school's commitment to work with Gorey Educate Together to resolve the bullying or cyber-bullying incident. Gorey Educate Together will provide emotional and practical support to all our pupils.

### **Implementation of curricula**

- The full implementation of the SPHE curriculum and the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes. E.g. 'Bullying Prevention for Pupils with Special Educational Needs,' delivered by Special Education Support Service, 2013. [*Development work to follow (as soon as possible) in the areas of: Cyber-Bullying and Identity-based Bullying.*]
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programme, when available. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardaí, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying.

### **Links to other school policies**

- Code of Behaviour, Child Protection Policy, Acceptable Use Policy (ICT,) Parental Involvement Policy, Learning Support Policy, Policy on Special Classes for Children with Autism, Relationships & Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy.

6. The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows (see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):

#### Investigating and Dealing with Bullying (the school will adhere to section 6.8.9 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures)

- The primary aim 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.)
- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

#### Recording of bullying behaviour (adhere to section 6.8.10)

- Informal pre-determination that bullying has occurred
- 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 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'  
The relevant teacher shall use the recording template at **Appendix 3** to record the bullying behaviour 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.
- When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal.

#### Intervention strategies in use at this school

- Teacher/pupil interviews
- Home/school communication. (Working with parent(s)/guardian(s) to support school interventions.)
- Negotiating agreements between pupils - and following these up by monitoring progress. (This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process.)
- Circle Time.
- In the event that a parent(s)/guardian(s) has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school will advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows (see Section 6.8.16 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):

- 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. pastoral care system, buddy/peer mentoring system, group work (such as Circle Time.)
- If pupils require counselling or 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 the pupil 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.

#### 8. Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring Practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

#### 9. 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. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management 11<sup>th</sup> June 2020.

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parent-Teacher Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and 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 Parent-Teacher Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

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

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

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

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

Date of next review: School Year 2020 – 2021.