

Thomond Primary School 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, the Board of Management of Thomond Primary 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 school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community; adults should model the type of behaviours they promote to pupils.
 - The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
 - The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Pupils are 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; the topic of bullying is addressed at each staff meeting.
 - Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff are encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision also applies to monitoring pupils' use of communication technology within the school. (See Supervision Policy and AUP).
 - The school's Anti-Bullying Policy is discussed with pupils and all parent(s)/guardian(s) are given a copy as part of the Code of

Behaviour of the school upon entry. It is also available on the school website.

- The implementation of regular whole school awareness measures, including posters, competitions, group assemblies etc.
 - Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way pupils 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, e.g.:
 - Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
 - Hand note in with homework.
 - Worry box for older children.
 - Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
 - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place. All teachers will teach children to recognise bullying behaviour and encourage them to use their voice to say 'no' to such behaviour.
 - Identify clear protocols to encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied.
 - Ensuring that children and parents accept the Acceptable Use Policy of the school.
- 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 transphobic 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*)
- All teachers
 - Principal
 - Deputy Principal
 - Any teacher may act as relevant teacher if the circumstances warrant it.
5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including, in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:
- SPHE
 - Circle Time and Restorative Practice
 - Social and Emotional Programmes
 - Visiting Speakers

- Incidental workshops organised by outside agencies
- Drama
- Creative Therapies
- Social Group work

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 are as follows (Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*)

- See Schools Code of Behaviour (Appendix 1)
- Aladdin recording system and templates included in Circular 0045/2013 (Appendix II)
- Class teacher reports all incidences of bullying to principal
- Principal contacts parents after repeated incidents of bullying (verbal, physical etc.)

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
- All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them on our database. All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher
- While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher must keep a written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same
- The relevant teacher must inform the principal of all incidents being investigated.

Intervention strategies

- S.P.H.E. (whole class intervention)
- Class contract (Whole class intervention)
- Child (being bullied and offender) spoken to individually by class teacher initially and by principal if class teacher feels it is warranted.
- Behaviour plan for individual repeat offender(s)
- Parents and principal working together to prevent repeated bullying incidents

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

(i) The primary aim for the class/principal teacher 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).

(ii) In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.

(iii) All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. 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.

(iv) Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

(v) Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible.

(vi) It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset.

(vii) Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.

(viii) Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.

(ix) All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way.

(x) When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.

(xi) If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements.

(xii) Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher.

(xiii) It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s).

(xiv) In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy). The school should give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils.

(xv) Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.

(xvi) It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school.

(xvii) Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable. This can have a therapeutic effect.

In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded by the principal teacher in the recording template at **Appendix II** (See Section 6.8.10 (iii)).

(xix) In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:

- Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased.
- Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable.
- Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable; and
- Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal.

(xx) 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.

(xxi) 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.

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.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on **9th November 2021** and was reviewed by the BoM on **15th November 2022** and on the **21st November 2023**.

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

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 and published on the school website. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: _____

Canon Donal McNamara
Chairperson of Board of Management

Sinéad Toomey
Principal

Date: **21st November 2023**

Date of next review; **November 2024**