

GCNS Anti-Bullying Policy

Introduction

Greystones CNS 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 investigated, having due regard for the well-being of the children involved.

The immediate priority, should a bullying incident occur, is ending the bullying, resolving the issues and restoring the relationships involved insofar as is practicable.

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.

This policy was drafted in consultation with the teaching staff of Greystones CNS. The policy was then ratified by the BOM. This policy is intended to inform the whole school community about Greystones CNS Anti-Bullying procedures.

CONTENTS		
Section 1	Key Principles of Best Practice, Definition of Bullying	p. 2
Section 2	Prevention of Bullying	p. 3-5
Section 3	Investigation of Bullying Behaviour	p. 6-9
Section 4	Programme of Support for those affected	p. 10
Section 5	Conclusion	p. 11-12
Appendices	For School Community: Anti-Bullying Code	Appendix 1
	For Teachers: Anti-Bullying Record (Stage 1)	Appendix 2
	For Teachers: Teacher Record (Stage 2)	Appendix 3
	For BOM: Checklist for Review of Policy	Appendix 4
	For BOM: Notification of Review of Policy	Appendix 5

Full Compliance

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB), the Board of Management of Greystones CNS 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.

SECTION 1

Key Principles of Best Practice.

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;
 - promotes respectful relationships across the school community.
- 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;
 - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils
- Supports for staff
- 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 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 incidents of intentional negative behaviour do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

SECTION 2

Our Education & Prevention Strategies

The education and prevention strategies that will be used by the school are as follows:

School-wide approach

- We model respectful behaviour to all, at all times.
- We explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- We notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- We consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school.
- We give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- We have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote positive desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.
- We highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.
- We promote the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- We foster and enhance 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.
- We supervise and monitor classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school in accordance with our Acceptable Use Policy.
- An Anti-Bullying code for the school is displayed on the school website. This will be discussed regularly at assemblies.
- Class surveys on bullying behaviour may be completed by the children throughout the school year.
- We 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 will 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. This will be explored at school assemblies, during discrete SPHE lessons and incidentally throughout the school year.
- Staff will ensure that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.:
 1. Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
 2. Suggestion/Worry box
 3. Check in Circles - monthly

- Parents can approach any member of the teaching staff but are encouraged to go directly to their child's class teacher. Parents who suspect their child is partaking in bullying behaviour are also encouraged to engage with their child's class teacher and to work collaboratively with them to resolve the situation.
- The Acceptable Use Policy in the school includes the necessary steps to ensure that access to technology within the school is strictly monitored, as is the pupils' use of mobile phones.
- The school's Anti-Bullying Policy and Code of Behaviour is available on the school's. The Anti-Bullying Policy & Code of behaviour will be discussed throughout the year with the pupils, in class and at assemblies.

Implementation of curricula

- The full implementation of the SPHE curriculum.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes, e.g. Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme.
- School wide delivery of lessons on Diversity and Inter-culturalism via the GMGY curriculum.
- 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. Integration from our ASD Class is an integral part of the school's inclusion strategy.
- The school will look at its 'hidden curriculum' to ensure that it is inclusive of minority groups e.g. books in library, displays and images, text books used, etc. (GMGY – Equality Policy)
- We use the NEPs Programme, "Get Up Stand Up" where appropriate.
- We run the Barnardos "Roots of Empathy" Programme where available.
- We implement the "Weaving Wellbeing Programme" throughout the school.
- Online programmes will be used in relation to online bullying/safety. (eg) "Hector's World" "Myselfie and the Wider World" - See AUP

SECTION 3

Who is Responsible for Implementing this Policy

- All staff members, school pupils, parents and school community have a part to play in the prevention of bullying in our school.
- Any pupil or parent/carer may report a bullying incident to any teacher in the school. Please be aware that isolated incidents do not constitute bullying.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff will report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.
- The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:
 - The child's class teacher
 - Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.
- The Anti-Bullying co-ordinators are:
 - Ms Tara D'Arcy DLP
 - Mr Phil Cheetham DDLP
 - Ms McDonagh
 - Ms Sheekey
- The anti-bullying co-ordinators will make themselves available in an advisory capacity for teachers concerned about suspected cases of bullying, investigations and supports.
- Staff understand that all bullying incidents are of a serious nature and should not be discussed in an informal setting.
- Whenever an incident is being investigated, the relevant teacher will inform the following:
 - Principal, Ms Tara D'Arcy & Deputy Principal, Mr Phil Cheetham
- Parents/carers 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.

Our Procedures for Investigating Bullying Behaviour

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).

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This policy applies to activities and events that take place:

- During school time (including break times)
- Going to and from school
- School tours/trips
- School extra-curricular activities

The school's procedures will be consistent with the following approach.

1. Dealing with Incidents

- All staff will keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. The yard book is used to record incidences that occur during play time and classroom incidences are recorded on Aladdin. If more than one pupil is involved, the note will be linked to each party. The teacher uses his/her professional judgement to decide which incidents merit recording.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
- In investigating and dealing with incidents, the relevant teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and/or how best the situation might be resolved.
- The relevant teacher will inform the principal/deputy principal of all incidents of bullying being investigated.

2. Stage 1: When Bullying has occurred

- All record keeping for Stage 1 is recorded in the 'Anti-Bullying Record' on Aladdin (Appendix 2). This document will be linked to all pupils involved.
- If a parent becomes aware of a bullying issue that is occurring in the school, it should be reported immediately to the relevant teacher. Parents are asked not to attempt to deal with this situation themselves. Once the incident is reported to the school, the procedures outlined in this policy will be followed.
- If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher will keep an 'Anti-Bullying Record' which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- The parents/carers of the parties involved will 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 will give parents/carers an opportunity for discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the pupils.
- When an incident of bullying occurs, teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.
 - Where possible, incidents will be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;

- All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned;
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher will 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;
- If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way;
- Thereafter, all those involved will be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member will be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements;
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after the interview by the teacher;
- If the teacher feels that the child is capable, he/she will be asked to write down their account of the incident(s);
- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts will be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
- It will also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents/carers) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents/carers and the school.
- A system of support will be put in place for those affected by the bullying. Please see Section 4 of this policy.

3. Follow up

- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved may 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.
- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher will, 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;
 - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardian(s) or the school principal or deputy principal.

4. Stage 2- Appendix 3

- The relevant teacher will use the recording template **Appendix 3** on Aladdin to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:
 - In cases where he/she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been effectively or adequately or appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred and began the implementation of Stage 1; or

- When the following bullying behaviours are identified:
 - ❖ Posting or endorsing a derogatory comment online about any member of the school community;
 - ❖ Sending group text messages or group private messages which are hurtful to another child;
 - ❖ Endangering the health and safety of a child through physical aggression.

Parents/Carers Rights

- Where a parent/carers is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent/carers will be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
- In the event that a parent/carers has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school will advise the parent/carers of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Bullying as part of a continuum of behaviour

- It is also important to note that bullying behaviour may escalate beyond that which can be described as bullying to serious physical or sexual assault or harassment. To ensure that any such cases are dealt with appropriately, the school's code of behaviour will be enforced and referral will be made to relevant external agencies and authorities where appropriate. In cases where the school has serious concerns in relation to managing the behaviour of a pupil, the advice of the National Education Psychological Service (NEPS) will be sought.

Referral of Serious Cases to Tusla

- Children First- National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children (Department of Children & Youth Affairs, 2017) & Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (DES, 2017) where "the incident is serious and where the behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive, the school will seek the advice of Tusla school team and then depending on their advice make a referral if necessary.
- Serious instances of bullying behaviour will, in accordance with the *Children First* and the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary Schools*, be referred to Tusla and/or Gardaí as appropriate.
- The *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* also provide that where school personnel have concerns about a child but are not sure whether to report the matter to Tusla, the Designated Liaison Person will seek advice from the HSE Children and Family Social Services.

SECTION 4

The School's Programme of Support

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying involves a whole school approach. Given the complexity of bullying behaviour, no one intervention/support programme works in all situations. Therefore, various approaches and intervention strategies may be used. As the school grows and various interventions are used, there will be a whole-staff discussion on how best to support all involved in cases of bullying. These practices will be added to this policy in time.

SECTION 5

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.

Availability of this Policy

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

Review of this Policy

- The effectiveness of the school's anti-bullying policy will be subject to continuous review in light of incidents of bullying behaviour encountered. The school will annually review the prevention and intervention strategies in place. Surveys of pupils (when old enough), staff and parents may be used to provide important information about the effectiveness of the anti-bullying measures in place and identify any significant behavioural trends that may benefit from early intervention.
- Data from Appendix 3 template for recording and reporting bullying to the school principal or deputy principal will be collated and analysed with a view to monitoring levels of bullying behaviour and identifying any particular issues that require attention or any significant trends in behaviour. A record of this analysis will be retained and made available to the Board of Management. Appropriate responses to any issues identified will be drawn up and implemented.
- This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management yearly using the checklist in Appendix 4. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: Alice O'Donnell
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: Tara D'Arcy
(Principal)

Date: 27/10/23
Date of next review: _____

Date: 27/10/23