



## **Roxboro National School Anti-Bullying Policy 2024/2025**

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 Roxboro National School has formally 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 anti-bullying policy for Roxboro was reviewed by the staff in June 2024 and is available on the school website.

### **Rational**

Bullying behaviour, by its very nature, undermines and dilutes the quality of education. Research shows that bullying can have short and long-term effects on the physical and mental well-being of pupils, on engagement with school, on self-confidence and on the ability to pursue ambitions and interests. School-based bullying can be positively and firmly addressed through a range of school-based measures and strategies through which all members of the school community are enabled to act effectively in dealing with this behaviour. (Anti-Bullying procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2013.) The staff of Roxboro N.S. have formulated this policy as a partner to the Code of Behaviour in order to promote a positive school climate.

### **Relationship to the ethos of the school**

Roxboro N.S. demonstrates a clear ethos of inclusion, co-operation and respect. This policy will reinforce a positive and safe environment for everyone.

The staff have reviewed this policy and consulted with parents to ensure that a clear policy is in place which compliments the ethos of the school and which will allow for the fair and prompt treatment of any complaints of bullying.

### **Aims**

- To promote a positive school culture and climate which encourages children to discuss and disclose incidents of bullying.
- To adopt a school-wide approach which develops a shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact.
- To implement education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures).

- To ensure effective supervision and monitoring of pupils.
- To develop a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and those involved in bullying behaviour.
- To develop procedures for recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy on an ongoing basis.

### **Definitions 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 (inc. during remote learning) 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.

### **Indications of bullying**

The following signs and symptoms may indicate bullying:

- Anxiety about attending school or reluctance to do so.
- Deterioration in educational performance.
- Pattern of physical illnesses.
- Unexplained changes in mood or behaviour.
- Signs of distress.
- Missing or damaged possessions.
- Unexplained injuries.

There may be other signs depending on the individual and his/her circumstances. The above signs do not necessarily mean that a pupil is being bullied but if repeated or occurring in combination, these signs do warrant investigation in order to establish what is affecting the pupil.

### **Adult Bullying**

The bullying of teachers is an issue which must be given a high priority by the Board of Management. Roxboro National School promotes a culture of respect and encourages those teachers who experience bullying behaviour to follow the Complaints Procedure.

### **Procedures for investigation of bullying**

The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:

Ms Gillian McBride

Ms Mary Fallon

Ms Michelle McNeela

Ms Clodagh Casey

Ms Clare Dempsey

All staff members must be vigilant at all times and have a duty to report suspected or potential bullying behavior. Class teachers will investigate and deal with allegations of bullying at Stage 1.

### **Procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behavior**

- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents. The primary aim in investigating and dealing with allegations of bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, where possible, the relationships of the parties involved.
- Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved and all discussions should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. The relevant teacher and/or the principal will conduct initial discussions. Should further discussion be necessary the parents of the child may attend.
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. If a group is involved, each member should be spoken with individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s).
- 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.
- 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.

- 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.
- 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.
- 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 relevant teacher on a Record of Bullying Behaviour form and given to the Principal.
- Parent 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.

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.

### **Education and prevention strategies**

- Teachers should repeatedly reinforce the message that if anyone is the victim of bullying behaviour, they should not retaliate in any way, but they should tell an adult. Victims should be reassured that if they tell, something will be done about the bullying in a safe manner and all reported incidents will be dealt with.
- Class lessons to be provided to enable pupils “how to tell”. Our school wide approach aims to change behaviour and encourage students to report bullying and to inspire positive action by bystanders which can reduce the negative effects of bullying on the victim. Immediate affirmation of children who report incidents which they have witnessed.
- A “worry box” to be put in each classroom.
- Displaying and promoting our anti-bullying slogan ‘Ours is a telling school, if there is a problem – share it.’
- Creating an annual awareness week for the school community about bullying.
- Displaying posters/material with anti-bullying messages around the school.
- Formal programmes of work including S.P.H.E., R.E., Walk Tall, RSE, Grow In Love, Stay Safe, Zippy Friends, My Selfie.
- Teachers and staff model respectful behaviour and language and model positive relationships.
- Effective monitoring and supervision of pupils. Teachers are encouraged to be vigilant on yard.
- Parents contribute to and support the school’s policy on bullying by encouraging positive behaviour both at home and at school, by being vigilant for signs and symptoms that their child is being bullied or is bullying others, by communicating concerns to the school.
- Cyber-Bullying requires access to technology. Pupils are supervised at all times when working with technology in the school. Pupils do not have access to their smartphones during the school day.

- Incidents of good and improved behaviour are rewarded and staff are encouraged to highlight acts of kindness and concern for others.
- The Catholic Ethos of the school encourages positive attitudes to inclusivity and equality. This permeates all aspects of the school day and throughout the teaching of the curriculum.
- Promotion of the continued development of a positive school climate & a culture of kindness is central to our anti-bullying policy.

**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:

*Stage 1:*

All reports of bullying must be dealt with initially by the class teacher.

- When a pupil reports s/he is being bullied, it is important to gather all of the facts from both sides (What, where, when, who, why?). This will involve an interview with the child who is alleged to have bullied using template at Appendix A.
- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best to resolve the situation.
- The aim for the class 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).
- Non-teaching staff will be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.
- The teacher should take a calm, unemotional, problem-solving approach.
- All sides are listened to separately and notes are taken.
- The notes are brief, factual and should be void of emotional or judgemental language.
- Instances are investigated outside the classroom to avoid public humiliations.
- All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regards to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way.
- Where possible, a witness is present.
- It is explained to the child involved how hurtful their behaviour is and attempts are made to encourage them to empathise with the alleged victim.
- The child/ children involved will be asked to promise not to repeat that behaviour.
- If there is a suspicion that bullying is taking place, the parents/guardians of all the children involved and the principal are informed by the class teacher. Parents will be welcome to discuss the issues with the class teacher and/or the principal.

*Stage 2:*

If this child breaks the promise and re-offends then the Deputy Principal or Principal with the class teacher will interview the child/children again. It is explained to them that this is their second time offending and that they have not committed to their promise. Again

attempts will be made to resolve the situation. They are now advised that if they break this promise again, they will have a meeting with the principal and their parent(s)/guardian and could face suspension.

- Parents/Guardians and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigations and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible.
- Information spoken about should not become available, so that the victim would be further tormented. (Need to know basis)

#### *Stage 3:*

If after the principal's meeting with the parents and the child the bullying continues, the class teacher, deputy principal and the principal will decide whether to move on to Stage 4 or to revert back to a previous stage.

#### *Stage 4:*

If a child breaks their promise twice then the matter is dealt with by the Principal. The Principal meets with the child and the parents/guardians and sanctions may be imposed up to and including suspension and expulsion (Subject to procedures in Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000).

**Recording of incidents:** All incidents at Stage 1, where a teacher deems that it is highly likely that bullying has occurred, will be logged by class teacher on the 'Recording of Alleged Bullying Behaviour' sheet available in the office. When filled they will be brought to the attention of the principal and filed in the Anti-Bullying file in the office.

Similarly, the Deputy Principal or Principal will record and file at Stages 2, 3 and 4. At least once every school term the Principal will provide a report to the BOM setting out the overall number of bullying cases reported by means of this template and confirm that all cases are being dealt with in accordance with procedure.

Sanctions may apply at all stages in consultation with the Deputy Principal / Principal. These may include:

- Loss of various privileges.
- Verbal reprimand
- Supervised detention during breaks
- Parents/Guardians may be requested to escort their child to and from school.
- Written work describing the incidents

The school may seek assistance and advice from outside agencies if necessary, including National Educational Psychological Service; TUSLA, The Child and Family Agency and the HSE (social services).

The aim of the school will always be reconciliation and resolution of conflict.

### **Programme of support for pupils affected by bullying**

- Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour should be encouraged to discuss them with teachers and will be supported in doing so.
- For those pupils with low self-esteem, opportunities should be developed to increase feelings of self-worth.
- Further interventions where appropriate will be put in place on a case by case basis.
- Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.
- *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.”

### **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 reviewed and adopted by the Board of Management in Term 3 2024.

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents’ Association. 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, 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.

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

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

Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of next review: Term 3 2024/2025

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