Anti-Bullying Policy
Our Lady of the Wayside NS

Introduction

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the National Education Welfare Board, the Board of Management of Our Lady of the Wayside N.S. 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.

This policy applies to activities and events that take place:
- During school time (including break times)
- School tours/trips
- School related activities, for example sport

Our Lady of the Wayside N.S. reserves the right to take action, where necessary, against bullying perpetrated outside the school, which has any negative impact within the school.

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 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 transphobic bullying.

❖ **Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils**

❖ **Supports for staff - e.g. Spectrum Life**

❖ **Consistent recording, investigating and follow up of bullying behaviour**
(including use of established intervention strategies) and

❖ **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 <u>repeated</u> 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 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.

Some examples of bullying behaviour are listed in Appendix 1

Additional Information on different types of bulling is set out in Section 2 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

All staff should be vigilant for signs of bullying.

The following signs/symptoms may suggest that a pupil is being bullied
- Anxiety about travelling to and from school
- Unwillingness to go to school or refusal to attend
- Deterioration in educational performance
- Pattern of physical illness
- Unexplained changes in mood or behaviour
- Visible signs of anxiety or distress

- Spontaneous out of character comments
- Possessions missing or damaged
- Increased requests for money or stealing money
- Unexplained bruising or cuts or damaged clothing
- Reluctance and or refusal to say what is bothering him/her.

These signs do not necessarily mean that a pupil is being bullied. If repeated or occurring in combination those signs do warrant investigation in order to establish what is affecting the pupil.

Role of School Personnel

A school-wide approach (involving school management, staff, parents and pupils) in dealing with the problem of bullying behaviour is a key element of effective practice.

Section 6.8 of *the Anti – Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post – Primary Schools* recommends that the relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying in Primary Schools is /are the class teacher(s). In the case where children from two different classes are involved, both class teachers will be deemed to be the relevant teachers. In such a case a local agreement can be made between the two relevant teachers that one of them takes on the case, or they work together on this. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying in Our Lady of the Wayside N.S. are the class teachers, the Principal and the Deputy Principal.

Our Strategies for Education and Prevention

The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying, homophobic and transphobic 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 Buddy System

Our school has a "Buddy System". Every child is paired up with a "Buddy". The teachers plan lessons, activities and workshops for the children and their buddies. The children are encouraged to get to know their "Buddy" and to foster a culture of empathy and care for others.

Student Council

The Student Council meet regularly. Part of their remit is to discuss the Code of Behaviour and the Bullying Policy. Children are made aware of bullying and are encouraged to report incidents immediately.

Internet Safety Workshops for Children

Internet Safety will be highlighted. An outside speaker will be invited in to talk to the children about cyber bullying.

Webwise Anti Bullying Resources

Playground

Games are provided for children to engage them during playtime.

Bullying Surveys

The children will be surveyed regularly regarding bullying.

Classroom

Classroom teachers are responsible for the implementation of programmes, such as "Walk Tall", RSE (Relationships and Sexuality Education) and "Stay Safe". Teachers will spend time talking to the children and discussing minor problems. It is important that the children feel that they can air grievances and be listened to in a safe, open and non- judgemental environment.

Assemblies and Awareness Drives

Regular assemblies will be held to acknowledge good behaviour and to create an awareness of bullying. We may also run a Friendship or Bullying awareness week/day.

SPHE

Social, Personal and Health Education is an integral part of life in Our Lady of the Wayside N.S. Through our daily involvement with the children we strive to give children a positive sense of self-worth and confidence, which will enable them to deal with the pressures of modern-day living. To this end we formally teach the "Stay Safe", "Walk Tall" and RSE programmes in class, over a two- year alternating programme. (See "Making the Links ")

There are specific lessons relating to the topic of Bullying in the Stay Safe Programme and these are taught explicitly at each class level.

Through these we endeavour to ensure that the children recognise the nature of bullying behaviour, understand the role of the bystander and are equipped with skills necessary to cope. We encourage a culture of telling, where the children are secure in the knowledge that when they report an incident to a trusted staff member in good faith, they are acting responsibly. We also address the issues of internet and social media safety in our classes through the use of resources like 'Webwise' and visits by the local Gardaí and IT experts – where issues covering personal safety and cyber-bullying are addressed.

We ensure that all children, in particular those with Special Education Needs (SEN), are helped to understand the nature of bullying, and how to seek help regarding situations where they feel unsafe. Our SEN team forms an integral part of our whole-school approach.

Our school will implement the advice in "Sexual Orientation Advice for Schools" as outlined in the RSE programme.

Religion

As a Catholic School, we cover the Grow in Love Programme in every class.
The core Christian message of this programme is the dignity and rights of every human being. This correlates directly with our SPHE classes and permeates how we interact   with each other in our school daily.

Whole staff Professional Development

Workshops/ talks will be organised 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 in terms of prevention and intervention.

Education for Parents

We may organise talks for parents. All the schools in the community work together in providing education for parents. When a school in the community hosts a talk on bullying or any related topic, they invite the parents of all the schools in the community to attend.

Supervision

Monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra – curricular activities applies to all teachers. In addition, 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.

Parent(s)/Guardians

Our protocols to encourage Parents(s)/Guardians to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied are as follows:
- The parent(s)/guardians may inform any teacher of their concerns.
- That teacher will then inform the relevant teacher.
- The relevant/class teacher will inform and consult with the Principal.
- If the parent(s)/guardians are not happy with the outcome, they can meet with the Principal.

(Refer also to our Complaints Procedure)

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

Our 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 underpinned by the fact that the majority of bullying incidents occur in the presence of bystanders. Therefore, we believe it is important to empower these bystanders to stand up for what is right, express their concerns and give witness to what they have observed. Encouraging bystanders to do the right thing will be an important aim of the Student Council and the Buddy System and we also use restorative practice.

In Our Lady of the Wayside N.S. the primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying behaviour is to deal with it in a manner that will resolve any issues and restore the relationships of the parties involved, as far as is practicable.

The steps that should be taken for reporting and recording bullying behaviour are outlined in detail in Appendix 2.

For cases of adult bullying the procedures as outlined in the INTO /Management Bodies publication "Working Together. Procedures and Policies for Positive Staff Relations" should be followed.

Our Programme of Support for Pupils

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

- 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, for example, Active learning Methodologies - group and circle work as outlined in the SPHE programmes of Walk Tall, Stay Safe and RSE.

- Depending on the incidence the school may organise group work, individual work or in class support with a Learning Support or Resource teacher.

- If pupils require counselling or further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with their parent(s)/guardian(s) and advise them on the supports available. 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 must be reported to a teacher.

- Support in the form of a trusted adult to speak to daily will be offered to the child who has been bullied for as long as this is deemed necessary.

- The child who has been engaging in bullying behaviour will be offered concrete support in changing his/her behaviour.

- The child who has witnessed bullying behaviour will be offered concrete support if necessary, by being given the opportunity to speak to a trusted adult on a regular basis to help him/her process what s(he) has witnessed.

- Children who make an initial report on what is later deemed to be bullying behaviour will be praised. The importance of the bystander will be highlighted.

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.

Review and Ratification

The policy was adopted by the Board of Management in May 2015.

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 of Education and Skill 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.

Appendices to this policy:

Appendix 1- General Behaviours which apply to all forms of Bullying.
Appendix 2-Reporting Bullying Behaviour.
Appendix 3- Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour.
Appendix 4 – Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation.

Reviewed	November 2022
Reviewed	January 2024

Signed:_____ Date:_22/1/24_ Signed:_____ Date: 22/1/24

Chairperson   Principal

This list is non-exhaustive.

- Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc.
- Physical aggression
- Damage to property
- Name calling
- Slagging
- The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person
- Offensive graffiti
- Extortion
- Intimidation
- Insulting or offensive gestures
- The "look" i.e. staring at another student in a provocative manner, for example, in a threatening, condescending or menacing way.
- Invasion of personal space
- A combination of any of the types listed.

CYBER BULLYING

- **Denigration:** Spreading rumours, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation.
- **Harassment:** Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual
- **Impersonation:** posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name.
- **Flaming:** Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight.
- **Trickery:** Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online.
- **Outing:** Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images.
- **Exclusion:** Purposefully excluding someone from an online group.
- **Cyber Stalking:** Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety.
- Silent telephone/mobile phone call
- Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls
- Abusive text messages
- Abusive email
- Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles
- Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures
- Abusive posts on any form of communicative technology
-

Useful websites

www.webwise.ie
www.staysafe.ie
www.sticksandstones.ie
www.internetsafety.ie

Appendix 2-Reporting Bullying Behaviour.

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school. Pupils with access to an SNA may wish to tell the SNA and parents may want to tell the SNA.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
- 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, to the relevant teacher.

On receipt of a report the relevant teacher will take a three step approach to dealing with the allegation of bullying:

Step 1
The relevant teacher speaks to individuals concerned to establish a chain of events and whether bullying has occurred. In the case of suspected bullying the relevant teacher will keep written records of the case. These records will be stored on Aladdin and will be <u>factual</u> account of the issue of concern between the parties.

Step 2
If it is established that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must complete Appendix 3 (and mark it as '20 day plan in place'). The teacher must provide this document to the principal.

The relevant teacher must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore as far as is practical the relationships of the parties involved. The teacher will establish a plan of action on how to resolve the issues within the next 20 school days.

This period of time gives the child who has been engaging in bullying behaviour the opportunity to change his/her behaviour.

If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, parent(s), guardian(s) of all parties concerned, will be contacted by the relevant teacher, to inform them of the incident, findings and the plan of action for the next 20 school days.
When the 20 school day period has elapsed the relevant teacher will determine whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed. In doing so 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.

Step 3
In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has <u>not</u> been adequately and appropriately resolved by the children within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded in the recording template (Appendix 3 and marked 'Not resolved') and provide this document to the Principal. These will form part of the Principal's report to the Board Of Management.

Should the relevant teacher require the support of the Principal and/or Deputy Principal at any time in the procedure, the relevant teacher should discuss the case with the Principal/Deputy Principal. Where appropriate, the Principal/Deputy Principal can proceed with the case. The relevant teacher shall be included in all further stages of the procedures.

The purpose of these procedures is to resolve the bullying behaviour so that it stops, rather than to apportion blame.

Intervention Strategies

- If it is deemed necessary that sanctions be implemented, the relevant teacher shall refer to the school's code of behaviour.
- A behaviour plan is implemented for the child who has been deemed to be bullying.
- 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.
- 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.

Investigating and dealing with incidents: Style of Approach

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the (relevant) teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) 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.
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.
- Where possible, incidents should 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. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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; 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 parent(s)/guardian(s) 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 parent(s) /guardian(s) an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the pupils.
- 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 perspectives of the pupil being bullied.
- It must also be made clear to all involved each set of pupils and parent(s) /guardian(s) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parent(s)/ guardian(s) and the school.

Follow up and recording

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

- Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardian(s) or the School Principal or Deputy Principal.
- 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.
- Where a parent/guardian is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent/guardian must be referred as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
- In the event that parent(s) /guardian(s) have exhausted the school's complaints procedures and are still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent(s)/ guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Recording of Bullying Behaviour

- 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:
  Code of behaviour
  All incidents of serious and gross misbehaviour (as defined in our code of behaviour) and bullying (as defined in this policy) will be recorded and will be filed in the Principal's office, and a note will be recorded on Aladdin.
  A copy of the 20 day plan should be added to Aladdin.

Informal (pre-determination that bullying has occurred)

- All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. 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.

Formal – determination that bullying has occurred

- If it is established that bulling has occurred, the relevant teacher must complete Appendix 3 (and mark it as '20 day plan in place'). The teacher must provide this document to the principal and also add it to Aladdin.
- 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.
- The storage of all records retained by the relevant teacher will be kept in a secure location for the duration of the school year and at the end of the school year, any documents relating to a bullying incident will be sent to the principal's office.

Appendix 3- Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour.

20 Day Plan in place	
Issue not resolved	

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name _____ Class_____

2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

3. Source of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es))*

Pupil concerned	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))*

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other	

5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern

6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box (es)) *

Physical Aggression	Cyber-bullying	
Damage to Property	Intimidation	
Isolation/Exclusion	Malicious Gossip	
Name Calling	Other (specify)	

7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

9. Details of actions taken

Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher)

Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

Note: The categories listed in the tables 3, 4 & 6 are suggested and schools may add to or amend these to suit their own circumstances.