**Anti-Bullying**

**Policy**

**

Glór na Mara Primary School

Tramore

Co. Waterford

1. **Introduction**

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 **Glór na Mara 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.

1. **Rationale**

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
* 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
  + explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based 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)
* On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy
* Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times
* Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
* Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school
* Involve pupils in the development of these messages
* Catch them being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention
* Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN
* Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent
* Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines
* Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media
* Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use.
* Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules
* Actively involve parents and/or the Parents’ Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media
* Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school
* Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas
* All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour
* Ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision
* School staff can get pupils to help them to identify bullying “hot spots” and “hot times” for bullying in the school
* Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas, changing rooms, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision
* Hot times again tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when pupils are in the playground/school yard or moving classrooms.
* Support the establishment and work of a student council
* The policy will apply to all members of the school community including pupils, teaching staff, ancillary staff, SNAs, parents, guardians and visitors.
* The policy furthermore, applies outside the school if bullying behaviour impacts upon any person’s participation in our school. It addresses negative behaviours which may arise or occur in school and which can affect the progress or well-being of members of our school community
* Every student has the right to an education free from fears and intimidation. Bullying behaviours will not be tolerated. However, bullying can be a secret activity and difficult to detect. Therefore, communication between home and school is of paramount importance. This policy’s aim is to fulfill our school’s obligation to foster in pupils, an attitude to learning and living positively, within the school community

1. 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:

Physical: Acts of physically hurting, damaging or stealing belongings.

These may include intimidation or threats of violence.

Covert: This can be characterised by being very difficult for someone outside the interaction to identify.

Social bullying: (Rumour spreading, exclusion or deliberate isolation.)

This is a form of emotional abuse. It can take the form of damaging a person’s social reputation, deliberate exclusion or sharing information that will have a harmful effect.

Cyber: Any type of bullying that occurs online, and may include threats of violence as well as sharing offensive content in image, video or audio media.

Verbal/Written: This includes, insulting or name calling, harassment or verbal abuse about a physical or personal characteristic.

Identity Based Bullying:

This includes homophobic, racist or ethnic-based bullying.

Also included is bullying of those with special educational needs/ disabilities.

\*Note: For the purpose of this policy, the definition of bullying also encompasses harassment and sexual harassment defined as follows:

**Harassment:** Any form of unwanted conduct that has the purpose or effect of undermining or violating a person’s dignity and/or creating a hostile offensive environment for the victim.

**Sexual harassment**: can be defined as unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical contact of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of violating a person’s dignity and/or creating a hostile offensive environment for the victim.

**Indicators of Bullying**

People who are victims of bullying may develop feelings of extreme anxiety and become more vulnerable to emotional damage. Victim impact may be indicated through change in mood and/or behaviour.

Self-harm or suicide can be a devastating result of bullying. It is imperative that we be alert to change in behaviour in order to facilitate early intervention.

Negative effects may manifest in the following ways:

Anger (psychological)

Anxiety

Stress

Panic

Frustration

Fear

Depression Indifference/Apathy

Feeling of worthlessness Low self esteem

Shame/Humiliation Loss of friendships

**Physical Masnifestations:**

Visible bruising / Contusions Nightmares Stomach Pain Bed-wetting Eating problems Headaches Pattern of minor illness Panic Attacks Self harm

Sleep disturbances Weight loss / gain

**Social Manifestations**

Reluctance to go to school Becoming isolated in class /yard

Sudden loss of friends, or avoidance of social situations

Becoming distant and withdrawn Reluctance to discuss anything with the teacher

Displaying bullying tendencies towards others Missing/ damaged property / possessions

deterioration in school performance or motivation Self- destructive behaviours

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour do not fall within the definition of bullying and will be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school’s Code of Good Behaviour.

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school’s Code of Good 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*.

1. The relevant teacher for investigating and dealing with bullying will be the class teacher(s).

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 can work together on this.

1. Some of the education and prevention strategies, in particular such strategies as needed to build, self-esteem, empathy, respect and resilience, that will be used by the school are as follows:

* SPHE Programme
* Stay Safe Programme
* Relationships and Sexuality Education
* Religious Education
* Friendship Week
* Buddy System
* Peer support
* Worry boxes
* Circle Time
* Assembly
* Playground activities
* Guest speakers where and when appropriate
* Effective classroom discipline

1. 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:

* Initial verbal report from child and or parent/staff member to designated teacher

* Should any member of staff witness possible bullying behaviour he/she should tell the perpetrator to stop immediately and shall make the relevant class teacher aware of the incident

* 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 chain of events and whether bullying has occurred.  (See Section 6.8.9 of *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools for* detailed steps on how to conduct an investigation).  In the case of suspected bullying the relevant teacher will keep written records of the case.

Step 2 -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 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, parents/guardians 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 - **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.  The aim of this is to reward positive behaviour and to encourage the child to make positive choices in his/her behaviour towards other children.  A trusted adult can act as a mentor to encourage positive behaviour in this child in the future

* In relation to bullying in schools, *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”
* 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

1. The school’s programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows

* Support will be provided for anyone who is bullied by offering them an immediate opportunity to talk about their experience with their teacher or other teacher, along with continuing support when they feel they may need it. A victim will be assured that the school community will help them and put monitoring procedures in place to safeguard them
* The school will inform parents/guardians of what has happened and of the measures being taken to help them and will encourage them to report further incidences if they occur
* Help and support will be sought for any child engaged in bullying behaviour. This will include speaking with them to discover why they became involved, informing their parents/guardians and continuing to work with them in order to modify their behaviour. The school code of good behaviour applies to bullying. The child engaged in bullying behaviour will be helped to see things from the victim’s point of view. Children engaged in bullying behaviour may be excluded from the playground at lunch break or subject to special monitoring procedures and if bullying continues they may be suspended in accordance with procedure.
* Any pupil who is involved in retaliation against a pupil who reports bullying will be subject to the school’s Code of Good Behaviour. Incidents of bullying will be used as opportunities for reinforcing the anti-bullying policy of the school. Follow-up meetings may be arranged to assess progress and/or restore relationships

1. 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.

1. 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 harassment of pupils or staff on any of the nine grounds specified i.e. gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

1. This policy was reviewed and then ratified by the Board of Management on **Thursday May 26th, 2022**.
2. This policy will be 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.
3. 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: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(Chairperson of Board of Management) (Principal)

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

# Appendix 1. Template for recording bullying behaviour

**1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group**

Name \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Class\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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

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| **3. Source** of bullying concern/report |  |  | **4. Location** of incidents |  |
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**5. Name of person(s) who reported** the bullying concern

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

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 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:**

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**8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact**

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1. **Details of actions taken**

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Signed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Relevant Teacher) Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_