

Dromin National School



Anti-Bullying Policy

Introduction

In accordance with the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines 1 issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of Dromin 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.

In Dromin N.S., we aim to provide a happy, caring and secure learning environment in which the individual pupil is encouraged and enabled to achieve their full potential. We strive to create a welcoming, safe, respectful and inclusive atmosphere in the school.

The school climate and atmosphere are created by the actions of everyone in the school. Respect for one another is central to our dealings with all school personnel. All members of the school community are expected to show respect to one another in all that they say and in all that they do.

In Dromin N.S. we believe that our pupils have the right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment free from all kinds of intimidation and without fear of being bullied. As our school is well organised, well-disciplined and well supervised, this minimizes the occurrence of bullying within the school. We make every effort to promote and foster self-esteem, self-discipline, resilience, respect for self and others and an awareness of the rights and responsibilities we each have as part of any group.

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 encourages respect, trust, care, consideration and support for others.
- creates a culture of reporting incidents
- models respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times
- teaches pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like and feels like in class and around the school.
- display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school.
- "catches" the pupils being good" notices and acknowledges 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 children with a disability
- gives constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are ignored

- has a system of encouragement to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routine
- teaches students about the appropriate use of social media
- explicitly teaches school rules in child friendly language in the classroom, in the yard and around the school.
- actively watches out for signs of bullying behaviour.

Effective Leadership

The Principal and teachers will strive to engender an ethos under which bullying is unacceptable.

A School-Wide Approach

to raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, staff, pupils and parents.

Parents and pupils have a role and responsibility in helping the school to prevent and address school-based bullying behaviour and to deal with any negative impact within school of bull in behaviour that occurs elsewhere

A shared understanding of what bullying behaviour 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, homophobic bullying and identity-based bullying

Effective supervision and monitoring of pupil

- Provide Supports for staff.
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour.
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

In accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary 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:

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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 below

Examples of Bullying Behaviours

Cyber

- **Denigration:** Spreading rumours, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation
- **Harassment:** Continually sending vivacious, mean or disrobing 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 information which you then post online
- **Outing:** Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or image

- **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 calls/mobile phone calls
- Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls
- Abusive text messages
- Abusive email
- Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/Twitter/YouTube or on games consoles
- Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures
- Abusive posts on any form of communication technology

Identity Based Behaviours

Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).

Homophobic and Transgender

- Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation
- Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation
- Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian... used in a derogatory manner
- Physical intimidation or attacks
- Threats

Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community

- Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background
- Exclusion on the basis of any of the above

Relational

This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:

- Malicious gossip
- Isolation & exclusion
- Ignoring
- Excluding from the group
- 'Bitching'
- Spreading rumours
- Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear
- Use or terminology such as "nerd" in a derogatory way
- Unwelcome or Inappropriate sexual comments or touching
- Harassment

The relevant teacher for investigating and dealing with bullying behaviour is the class teacher. Teachers who witness or are informed of bullying behaviour must inform the class teacher/teachers. The Principal must always be informed by the class teacher and will become involved as appropriate.

The education and prevention strategies that will be used by Dromin N.S. are as follows:

- A school wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.
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- The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
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- The fostering and enhancing of 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.
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- An annual review of appropriate policies with a view to assessing effectiveness and staff requirements through internal staff knowledge/expertise and external sources.

**Special
Educational
Needs,
Disability**

- Name calling
- Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs
- Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognize and defend themselves against bullying
- Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues
- Mimicking a person's disability
- Setting others up for ridicule

- School wide awareness raising on all aspects of bullying.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities.
- 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.
- Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school to be displayed publicly in the classrooms.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils in age appropriate language

A copy of the Anti-Bullying Policy will be made available on our school website.

- Encourage a culture of reporting with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders to ensure they understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place. 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, what to tell and how to tell in the event of bullying behaviour occurring.
 - a) Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time
 - b) Home-work Journal
- Parents are aware of the protocol in approaching the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied through the school's Communication Policy.
- Educating pupils on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while on-line and also on developing a culture of reporting any concerns about cyber-bullying.
- Access to technology within the school is monitored by class teachers. The school's internet is appropriately blocked by NCTE. Pupils are not allowed to bring mobile phones or any devices which may be connected to the Internet to school.
- The school will fully implement the SPHE Curriculum, including the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes. e.g. Stay Safe Programme
- The school's Code of Discipline will be fully adhered to by all teachers.
- 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.
- The school will implement the advice in "Sexual Orientation Advice for Schools", RSE Primary

LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES

Code of Behaviour
Child Protection Policy
Supervision Policy
Communication Policy
R.S.E Policy
S.P.H.E. Policy
Enrolment Policy
Health & Safety Policy
Dignity in the Workplace Policy
Internet Safety Policy
Health and Safety Policy

Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

Our school has a consistent and clear approach to investigating and dealing with bullying when it occurs. It is very important that all involved understand the approach from the outset

A pupil or parent may bring a bullying concern to any teacher in the school. However, it is common practice that the relevant teacher for investigating and dealing with bullying is the class teacher who deals with bullying incidents which affect any child/children in his/her own class. It is school policy that the class teacher is the first point of contact. The principal and deputy principal are always on hand or advise the teacher if needed.

What you should do if you think your child is being bullied or bullying others?

- Do not approach the child that you suspect may be involved in a bullying incident.
- Arrange for a private meeting with your child's class teacher and then discuss your concerns with them.
- The teacher will investigate all reported incidents, with the ultimate aim of restoring — as far as is practical — the relationship of the parties involved.

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. In that way pupils gain confidence in "telling". It will be made clear, by all teachers and regularly at whole school assemblies, that when children report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.

It is very important that all involved understand the approach from the outset.

Non-teaching staff, special needs assistants, secretaries or any other ancillary staff will report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

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 relationship of the parties involved as quickly as possible. The support and co-operation of parents is paramount in dealing with and resolving bullying issues.

Teachers will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents. In so far as possible, incidents will be investigated in such a way as to ensure the privacy of all involved.

All interviews are conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. In this way, pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information.

When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the class teacher will seek answers of **what, where, who and why**. This will be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with conflict in a non-aggressive manner.

Our Procedures for Dealing with Bullying Behaviour

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

Where the 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.

If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first. 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 about each other's statements.

Each member of the group will be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after being interviewed by the teacher. In some cases, it may also be appropriate and helpful to ask those involved to write down the account of the incident(s)

It will be made clear to all involved (pupils and their 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. (See sanctions listed in the Code of Good Behaviour & Discipline).

Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved will 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 class 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, this must be recorded by the teacher in the recording template and the Principal and Deputy Principal will be informed.

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.

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 through the Principal and the Board of Management.

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.

Investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour

The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:

Dromin N.S. has formal noting and recording of bullying behaviour. All records are maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation.

While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the teacher will use his/her professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same. If the teacher is in any doubt, he/she will consult with the Principal or Deputy Principal.

If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, a written record must be kept and passed on to the Principal or Deputy Principal. These records will be kept in a secure place in the school. All incidents of bullying behaviour will also be recorded in the school's Bullying Record Book by the Principal.

Bullying as part of a Continuum of Behaviour

In Dromin N.S. it is important to note that bullying behaviour is part of a continuum of behaviour rather than a stand-alone issue and in some cases behaviour may escalate beyond that which can be described as bullying to serious physical assault or harassment. To ensure that any such cases are dealt with appropriately, the school's anti-bullying policy will provide for appropriate linkages with the overall Code of Discipline and provide for referral to be made to relevant external agencies and authorities where appropriate.

In cases where this 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 the HSE

Where the Principal and Deputy Principal deem that the incident is serious and where the behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive, the school will consult with the HSE Children and Family Social Service (Tusla) and/or the Gardaí as appropriate (in accordance with Children First and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools).

Where teachers have concerns about a child but are not sure whether to report the matter to Tusla, the Designated Liaison Person must seek advice from Tusla.

Supports for Pupils Affected by Bullying

A programme for pupils who have been bullied is in place in Dromin N.S. In addition to this, such pupils may need counselling (a list of counsellors is available to parents) and/or opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed, A pastoral care and social skills programme is available in the school.

A programme of support for those pupils involved in bullying behaviour is also part of the school's intervention process. Pupils involved in bullying behaviour need assistance on an ongoing basis. For those with low self-esteem, opportunities will be developed to increase feelings of self-worth, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience. Learning strategies will be applied within the school to allow for the enhancement of the pupil's self-worth. Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may also need professional counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.

Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour will be encouraged to discuss them with teachers. An opportunity to do this is during regular Circle Time activities or as part of the SPHE/RSE programme in every class. Friends for Life, Fun Friends and the Incredible Years Programmes are in place in our school. Participation in Group Work and Buddy Systems are also used. Classrooms will celebrate Good Deeds.

Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place both to prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

Ongoing Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy

The effectiveness of the school's anti-bullying policy will be evaluated and reviewed as needed. The implementation and effectiveness of this policy will be included as an agenda item at staff meetings to ensure that concerns about the policy or the welfare of individual pupils can be shared and effectively addressed.

Recording templates for bullying behaviour will be stored separately from discipline notes, in a secure area in the principal's office. This data will be collated and analysed once in every school year with a view to monitoring levels of bullying behaviour

Periodic Summary Reports to the Board of Management

The Principal will provide regular reports to the Board of Management setting out:

- the overall number cases reported to the Board of Management (by means of the bullying recording templates) since the previous report to the Board of Management and
- confirmation that all cases have been or are being dealt with in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy and the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

The teachers' representative on the Board of Management may also have a role to play in informing the Board of Management about bullying issues in the school.

The minutes of the Board of Management meeting will record the above but in doing so will not include any identifying details of the pupils involved.

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.

Monitoring, Evaluation & Review

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. A standard checklist will be used in undertaking the review. The school will put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement identified by the review.

A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department. This school's Anti-Bullying Policy and its procedures to support the pupil's well-being will be part of whole school and other evaluations by the Department inspectorate.

Conclusion

All members of the teaching staff along with the Board of Management were involved in the preparation of this policy and views of parents and pupils were sought.

This anti-bullying policy has been made available to school personnel, will be on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. All parents are asked to study the policy. This policy will be reviewed regularly and as deemed necessary. The views and opinions of the partners in education are welcome at all times.

Signed: Seán Clare
Príomhoide

Signed: Michael Murphy
Chairperson, Board of Management

Reviewed by the Board of Management on: 28.9.2022