

## **Catherine Mc Auley National School – Anti-Bullying Policy**

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 Catherine McAuley 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 by the Department of Education in September in 2013. This policy document supersedes all previous Anti-Bullying policy documents published by the Board of Management.

Here at Catherine McAuley we believe that all children have a right to learn in a supportive caring and safe environment. In our school it is made clear that bullying is wrong and will not be tolerated, and therefore is fully committed to certain key principles of preventing and tackling bullying outlined in the following policy.

### **A. Positive School Culture and Environment**

**B. A shared understanding and recognition of what bullying is, and its impact.**

**C. Raising awareness through school policies and Staff CPD.**

**D. Outlining and communicating the role of school leadership and other staff, students and parents.**

**E. Implementation of education and prevention strategies** (including building of empathy, self-esteem and resilience in pupils, explicitly addressing the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including racial, homophobic and transphobic bullying).

**F Consistent noting, investigation, recording and follow-up of bullying behaviour.**

**G. Adequate follow-up support for victim/offender** (including restorative justice strategies).

**H. On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying policy.**

## **A. Positive School Culture and Environment**

The school acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment. A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all is cultivated, with adults modelling the type of behaviours they wish to promote to pupils.

The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, is a major part of this whole school approach.

The self-esteem and resilience of our pupils is enhanced through curricular and extra-curricular activities, with pupils being provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.

Examples of activities which foster a positive school atmosphere include:

- Structured Drama Programme
- Resource Teacher
- Circle Time
- Assemblies
- Yard Reward Programme
- Collaborative Work- Gardening, Drama, Co-Operative Games
- Religious Education
- R.S.E. Programme
- Stay Safe
- Walk Tall

## **B . Shared Understanding of what Bullying is.**

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. Bullying behaviour is intentional and deliberate, and aims to make a person feel upset, intimidated or afraid. A single incident will be dealt with seriously but is not bullying. An exception to this is cyber-bullying whether one incident may be construed as bullying.

The most common forms of bullying are:

- **Physical:** Pushing, shoving, kicking, hitting
- **Verbal:** name-calling, teasing, insulting, humiliating
- **Emotional:** making threats, spreading rumours, excluding, ignoring etc.
- **Non-Verbal:** making suggestive, provocative or intimidating gestures
- **Cyber-Bullying:** sending threatening or upsetting messages or images or deliberate exclusion from online groups.
- **Personal property:** Threats against or damage to a person's property

**This is not an exhaustive list.**

### **C. Raising Awareness through School Policy and Practice**

Awareness is raised through School Policies:

- Code of Behaviour
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- SPHE Policy

School Practice:

Parents are requested to sign up and support the ethos of the school.

Information meetings are held regularly for parents and students which create awareness and provide strategies for the prevention of cyber-bullying.

### **D. Outlining and communicating the role of school leadership and other staff, students and parents.**

**The staff are required to:**

- Be role models in word and action at all times
- Prevent bullying by adopting a proactive, pastoral approach
- Be observant of signs of distress or suspected incidents of bullying
- Make efforts to remove occasions for bullying by active patrolling during supervision duty
- Take steps to help victims and remove sources of distress without placing the victim at further risk
- Report suspected incidents of bullying to the principal who will follow the designated procedures
- Incidences of bullying behaviour can extend beyond the school. The journey to and from school is one which can provide particular opportunities for bullying to occur. The school's policy will be given to those closely involved (bus drivers, wardens etc.) so that if bullying behaviour is witnessed by them they may report it to the school.

### **The Role of the Students**

**Students are required to:**

- Show consideration respect and support towards others
- Be able to identify bullying behaviour
- Not bully others
- Tell if they are being bullied or if they see someone else being bullied
- Engage in responsible reporting when witnessing or experiencing bullying

behaviour

- Develop a sense of empathy for targeted members of the school community and as a result take safe and sensible action as a bystander

## **The Role of the Parents**

### **Parents are required to:**

- Support the school in the implementation of the Anti-Bullying Policy
- Watch out for signs of distress in their child e.g. unwillingness to attend school, a pattern of headaches, missing equipment or requests for extra money, change in personality
- Take an active interest in your child's social life especially their online life.
- Inform the teacher/principal if bullying is suspected
- Keep a written record
- Communicate with your child that they must tell you if they are being bullied and that parental involvement may be required
- Be willing to attend interviews in the school if your child is involved in any bullying incident
- Be willing to inform the school of any cases of suspected bullying even if your child is not affected
- Monitor your child's online/phone activity at all times to ensure they are using them in a safe and responsible manner
- Never directly contact a student or the parent of a student, to intervene in behavioural issues, independently of the school

## **E. Possible Education and Prevention Strategies**

- School wide awareness and training on all aspects of bullying for students and parents (e.g. talks on internet safety)
- Supervision of corridors, school grounds and trips outside the school
- Buddy systems to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect
- Display and promotion of the Anti-Bullying Code in classrooms and common areas through posters, competitions etc.
- Provide a means of telling such as a Worry Box
- Provide multiple opportunities to build self-esteem and resilience
- Promote an appreciation of diversity in all its guises with particularly addressing homophobic or transphobic bullying and cyber-bullying

## **F. Consistent noting, investigation, recording and follow-up of bullying behaviour.**

### **Designated Procedures for Noting and Reporting Suspected Bullying**

- When bullying is suspected or an allegation of bullying is made a preliminary investigation may be carried out by the class teacher
- Each teacher will keep a written account of incidents reported on a designated report form
- If bullying has occurred it may be resolved within the classroom
- An incidents sheet may be kept on Aladdin which will track repeated behaviours
- This incident sheet is reviewed by staff at regular intervals with a view to detecting patterns of behaviour which may indicate that bullying is taking place
- If bullying is established it is reported to the Principal and the following procedures are followed:

#### **Staff will respond as follows:**

- Listen and understand
- Reassure the child
- Help the victim to see if there is anything they can do to help the situation
- Take steps to ensure the pupil's safety
- Consult class teacher-If the pupil is in another class the relevant teacher should be informed within the school day if possible. If more than one other class is involved the principal should be consulted also. (See guidelines below regarding group involvement.)
- Speak with the other people involved (individual or group) and advise the offender(s) that this behaviour is unacceptable
- Involve parents, students and other members of staff where appropriate
- Advise the offender(s) of likely consequences if the harassment continues
- Implement the appropriate sanctions as listed below

### **Sanctions/Procedures**

**Upon determination that bullying has occurred, following process should be followed:**

#### **Stage 1**

- Where other staff members are available to supervise the classes concerned,

incidents are, where possible, investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.

- 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 or 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 to possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after the interview by the teacher.
- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents Guardians 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). If deemed appropriate the school may invite parents Guardians for face-to-face meetings to provide them with an opportunity to discuss ways in which they can reinforced or support the actions being taken by the school. It is explained to the alleged bully how hurtful their behaviour is and attempts are made to courage them to emphasise with the alleged victim.
- The aim for the class teacher is investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issue and to restore as far as is practical the relationship of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame).
- Teachers endeavour to support each member of a group for the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher. This support may take the form of close monitoring by staff members involved (both in class and at play time). Other relevant staff members are made aware of potentially vulnerable children following the investigation.
- The teacher should take a calm unemotional problem solving approach.
- All sides are listen to separately and notes are taken.
- The notes are brief, factual and should be void of emotional or judgemental language.
- 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 useful information in this way.( **See anti-bullying procedures for primary and post-primary schools 6. 8. 9 page 30-31 for further suggestions**)
- The child/ children involved will be asked to sign "**Pupil Behaviour Promise 1**" one which is filed in the principal's office.
- The code of behaviour will be invoked in circumstances where it is deemed prudent by the relevant teacher and school principal /deputy principal.
- If parents are still concerned that the bullying has not stopped they must request that the principal becomes more involved.

## Stage 2

If the child breaks their '**Pupil Behaviour Promise**' and re-offends then the principal and /or the class teacher will interview to child /children again.

### The following are the steps that would be followed in Stage 2

- The same interview process as described in Stage 1 will be applied at this stage. The principal will conduct an interview with the "alleged bully" which will be recorded on the template for recording bullying behaviour). This template will be stored in the principal's office and the principal will take note.
- It is explained to the child 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. Once more students will sign the "**Pupil Behaviour Promise 2**". This time this promise will also need

- to be signed by their parents.
- Their parents will be called into the school to discuss the situation further. At the discretion of the principal, meetings with parents may take place with or without their child.
- As a consequence of their continued inappropriate behaviour, the student may be excluded from specific class activities, outings, yard time or others at the discretion of the Principal.
- Parents will also be encouraged to implement some form of consequences at home.
- The code of behaviour will be invoked in circumstances where it is deemed prudent by the relevant teacher and school principal.
- The student and their parents will be informed that if another similar incident occurs, the bullying will be considered to be at Stage 3. **Parents are informed that their child may be suspended for up to 3 days.**
- Parents and pupils are required to cooperate with any investigations and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring as far as practicable the relationship of the parties involved as quickly as possible.

### **Stage 3**

- If a child reoffends and breaks their promise for a third time, the principal will discuss this matter with the Chairperson of the Board of Management. Following this, school based sanctions as set out in the code of behaviour will be implemented. **These sanctions may include suspension and/or expulsion from the school.**

**Incidents that are deemed by the principal to be of a very serious nature may skip the first two stages and go directly to Stage 3.**

## **G. Further Follow-Up and Support**

### **Follow-up**

If the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable, follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date.

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. **(See Restorative Justice Section below)**

**It is made clear to all involved that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter, between them and not an issue to be discussed outside the school-led process.**

## **Support**

Pupils involved in bullying behaviour may need assistance on an on-going basis.

- Those victims low in self-esteem will be given opportunities to increase feelings of self-worth (See S.P.H.E. policy)
- 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.
- Young people who are repeatedly bullied, or who persistently bully others may need additional support and referral to either Educational or Child Psychology services.

## **Restorative Practice**

Both parties will need a way forward to be mapped out and supported with a view to restorative justice being attained. Restorative Practice is a process to involve, to the extent possible, those who have a stake in a specific offence and to collectively identify and address harms, needs and obligations, in order to heal and put things as right as possible for all parties.

### **People who have been harmed need:**

- Someone to listen to my story
- Time to calm down
- A chance to ask-why me?
- A sincere spontaneous apology
- Things put right
- Reassurance it won't happen again

## **Restorative dialogue**

Restorative dialogues have a list of two questions. One is for addressing challenging behaviour and the other for addressing someone who was harmed by the actions.

Where two parties have mutually hurt one another, both lists of questions may be drawn from interchangeably.

### **Basic questions for responding to challenging behaviour:**

- What happened?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- What have you thought about since?
- Who has been affected by what you did?
- In what way?



- What do you think you need to do to make things right?

**Basic questions for helping someone that has been hurt by another's actions:**

- What did you think when you realised what had happened?
- What impact has this had on you and others?
- What has been the hardest thing for you?
- What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

These questions create a feedback loop, so that people can hear how their actions have affected others, and encourage them to take responsibility for their actions. They also pave the way for solutions to problems to be found. These questions separate people's behaviour from their intrinsic worth as a person, allowing them to admit their mistakes, right their wrongs and be reintegrated back into their class/community.

The question 'Why did you do that?' is not included because it tends to put people on the defensive and often people may not really know why they did what they did. Impulsive behaviour is usually impulsive and thoughtless.

**Restorative skills needed**

**Certain skills are needed on the part of the facilitator/ mediator;**

- Remain impartial and non-judgmental
- Facilitating dialogue and problem-solving
- Respect the perspective of all involved
- Actively and empathically listen
- Develop a rapport amongst participants
- Empower participants to come up with solutions rather than suggesting or imposing
- ideas
- Creative questioning
- Have warmth, compassion and patience

**H. Review of Effectiveness of this Policy**

This policy will be reviewed on a regular basis. Any incidents of bullying occurring in any given year will be reviewed at the end of that year with reference to the following:

- Clarity of the Policy
- Consistency of the Policy

- Reduction of Bullying
- Overall success of the Policy

### **Implementation**

All teachers are responsible for the implementation of this plan. It will be monitored and discussed by the anti-bullying committee in collaboration with staff members. When necessary these discussions will take place at staff meetings and/or planning days.

### **Timeframe**

Timeframe for implementation: \_\_\_\_\_ Timeframe for review: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Ratification and Communication**

This code of behaviour will be distributed to all teachers by \_\_\_\_\_, with a view to ratification by the Board of Management in \_\_\_\_\_. This plan was ratified by the Board of Management on:

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

Certificate of Co-Operation with Catherine McCauley N.S.

Anti-Bullying Policy

At Catherine McAuley NS each member of the school community has the right to enjoy school in a secure environment where the values of respect and tolerance are paramount. With this in mind, an Anti-Bullying Policy that represents the collective thinking of our school community has been devised. We request that parents read the policy carefully with their child/children and discuss the contents.

Please sign the following undertaking and return this form to the school.

I confirm that I/we have received this document and commit to sharing this with my child \_\_\_\_\_, we agree to uphold this policy.

Signed by Parents/Guardians: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Please keep the policy document safely at home for future reference.