



Anti-Bullying Policy

Ratified at BOM Meeting on 18th November, 2020
(Online meeting due to Covid-19)

Signed Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed Principal

Date

Date of next review: November 2022

Anti-Bullying Policy

1. 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 **Rush and Lusk Educate Together 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 Circular 0045/2013 - the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* which were published in September 2013.
2. The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of children and is therefore fully committed to the following **key principles of best practice** in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:
 - a) A positive school culture and climate which
 - is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity
 - encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment and
 - promotes respectful relationships across the school community
 - b) Effective leadership
 - c) A school-wide approach
 - d) A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact
 - e) Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that
 - build empathy, respect and resilience in children
 - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying, in particular homophobic and transphobic bullying
 - f) Effective supervision and monitoring of children
 - g) Training and support for staff
 - h) Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies) and
 - i) On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying policy.

3. In accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* bullying is defined as follows:

Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
- cyber-bullying
- 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 will be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.

However, in the context of this policy, **placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.**

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Appendix 7 of this policy, and in section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

4. The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with suspected bullying are:

- All Class and SEN teachers
- Noel Reilly (Principal)/ Helen O'Reilly (Deputy Principal)

5. The education and prevention strategies used by the school are as follows:

5.1 A School-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.

- The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our children through both curricular and extra-curricular activities. Children will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.
- Whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develop an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on children's lives and the need to respond to it.
- School-wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include children, parents/guardians and the wider school community.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff are encouraged to also be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers.
- Involvement of the Student Council in contributing to a safe school environment.
- Development and promotion of the school's Anti-Bullying charter - displayed publicly in classrooms and in common areas of the school. Children from First class upwards sign up to the Anti-Bullying charter each school year (Appendix 2), while Junior and Senior Infants create an age-appropriate class version.

- At the beginning of each school year, parents/guardians are reminded to read the Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policies with their children.
- Parents/guardians are requested to sign the Certificate of Co-operation with the school Code of Behaviour.
- The implementation of regular whole school awareness measures including Friendship/Anti-Bullying week; a dedicated noticeboard in the school on the promotion of friendship and bullying prevention; parent/guardian seminars organised by the PTA; regular school or year group assemblies.
- Anti-Bullying Campaign regular class surveys administered to children as appropriate.
- Clear protocols are in place to encourage parents/guardians to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied.
- Our ICT Acceptable Use policy includes the necessary steps to ensure that access to technology within the school is strictly monitored.
- A culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way children gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It is made clear to all children that when they report incidents of suspected bullying, they are not considered to be telling tales, but are behaving responsibly.
- Ensuring that children know who to tell and how to tell e.g.:
 - Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time
 - Hand note up with homework
 - Phone call to the school or to a trusted teacher
 - Get a parent/guardian or friend to tell on your behalf.

5.2 Implementation of curricula

- The full implementation of the SPHE curriculum, including the Relationships and Sexuality Education and Stay Safe Programmes.
- The use of relevant strands of the Learn Together Programme.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff to effectively deliver these programmes.
- School-wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes (e.g. Stay Safe Programme, Walk Tall Programme).
- Implementation of programmes to enhance children's self-esteem and resilience, as well as promoting a culture of friendship and respect (e.g. Weaving Wellbeing, Friends for Life)
- Workshops with Community Gardaí or other relevant organisations, covering issues such as personal safety and cyber-bullying.
- The use of WEBWISE – The primary school internet safety teaching resource.

The school specifically considers any differentiation/adaptations required for children with special educational needs with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all children to engage and respond appropriately.

5.3 Links to other policies

Other school policies that are particularly relevant to bullying are:

- Code of Behaviour
- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Internet Acceptable Use policy
- Special Education Needs policy
- Curriculum policies (e.g. SPHE, Learn Together, RSE)
- Equality Policy
- Substance Use Policy

6. 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:

The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved. Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including children, parents/guardians) understand this approach from the outset. Parents/guardians and children are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues.

Reporting bullying behaviour

- Any child or parent/guardian may bring an alleged bullying incident to any teacher in the school.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff (secretaries, SNAs, caretakers, cleaners) must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them.

Investigating and dealing with incidents:

All recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective manner. 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. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

- Where possible incidents are investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved. To support class teachers in this regard the principal will arrange adequate supervision to allow the class teacher time out of the classroom to conduct investigations.
- Written notes/records of all investigations into suspected cases of bullying are kept by teachers in the **Class Behaviour Book**. Each class teacher will keep this book in a secure place. If a support teacher is conducting the investigation he/she should also use the Class Behaviour Book for the relevant class. At the end of the school year these Behaviour Books are passed on to the new class teacher. Guidelines for recording in the Behaviour book have been given to teachers (Appendix 5).

- The Behaviour book is for internal school use only and information will not be shared with other schools.
- All interviews are conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all children concerned. Children who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way.
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the teacher seeks answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This is done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
- Incidents which are of a serious nature, or which involve children from a number of classes may be referred to the principal immediately. The principal then conducts this investigation.
- If a group is involved, each member is interviewed individually at first. Following this, all those involved are met as a group if appropriate. At the group meeting, each member is 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 and helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incidents.
- At any stage the teacher may seek the help and support of a member of the In-School Management Team.
- If it is established that bullying has taken place a **Bullying Report Form** (Appendix 3) is filled out by the teacher and **the principal is informed.**
- All records and forms should be stored securely by the class teacher and a copy of all Bullying Report Forms should be given to the principal. This file will be securely maintained in Noel's office.
- In cases where it has been determined by the teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, **the parent(s)/guardian(s) of those involved are contacted** at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken. The school gives parents/guardians an opportunity to discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the children.
- Where the teacher has determined that a child has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it is made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's Anti-Bullying policy and efforts are made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the child being bullied.
- **It is also made clear to all involved (each child and parents/guardians) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the child being disciplined, his or her parent/guardian and the school.**

Sanctions may include the following (these are not in sequential order)

- Letter of apology and a promise to stop the bullying behaviour
- Loss of yard time
- Meetings with principal/parents
- Loss of fieldtrip opportunity
- Withdrawal from representing school (e.g. playing sport, choir)

- Temporary exclusion from classroom, supervised by SEN teacher or principal
- Request for parental supervision on the way to and from school.

Follow up:

In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, use his/her professional judgement to take the following factors into account:

- Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
- Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved;
- 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 principal or deputy principal.

Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved are arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the child who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.

NOTE 1: Where a parent/guardian is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, they should be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures. In the event that they have exhausted the school's complaints procedures and are still not satisfied, the parent/guardian must be advised of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

NOTE 2: The relevant teacher may also use the **Bullying Report Form** to record cases where he/she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred.

Established intervention strategies:

- Teacher interviews with all children
- Negotiating agreements between children and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process.
- Working with parents/guardians to support school interventions
- No Blame Approach
- Circle Time
- Restorative conversations/conferencing.

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

- In-school support and opportunities will be provided for the children affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience through
 - SEN Team intervention (One Good Adult)
 - group work such as Circle time
 - the use of programmes e.g. Talkabout/Weaving Wellbeing

- If children require counselling or further support the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be for the child affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.

8. 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:

- There are agreed monitoring and supervision practices in the school.
- Bullying danger spots have been identified.
- All staff – class teachers, SEN teachers, SNAs and ancillary staff are actively engaged with anti-bullying practices and procedures in our school.
- An active Student Council encourages discussion and debate on student issues.
- All internet sessions are supervised carefully by teachers.

9. 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 children or staff or the harassment of children 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).

10. This policy was originally adopted by the Board of Management on April 9th 2014, revised and ratified on 18th November 2020.

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parent Teacher Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

12. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year (Appendix 4). Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parent Teacher Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department

13. List of Appendices

Appendix 1:	Children's version of Anti-Bullying policy
Appendix 2a/2b:	Anti-Bullying Charter
Appendix 3:	Bullying Report Form
Appendix 4:	Checklist for Annual Review
Appendix 5:	Investigation Guidelines for Teachers
Appendix 6:	Practical Tips for Building a Positive School Culture and Climate
Appendix 7:	Examples of Bullying Behaviour