

Forgney National School

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Anti-Bullying Policy

1. Rationale

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 Forgney National 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.

2. School Culture and Climate

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;

A cornerstone in the prevention of bullying is a positive school culture and climate that is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity and respect.

A school policy on bullying is most effective when supported by a positive school climate which encourages respect, trust, care, consideration and support for others.

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;

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.

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 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 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.

N.B – The reference to text messages, images etc; transmitted through social media above, refers only those messages images etc; uploaded on personal ICT equipment within the school or during school related activities such as educational tours etc;

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 in Section 2 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

Key principles of Best Practice

The school acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment. The school acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual and his/her worth as a human being.

The school promotes positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among all its members.

The school has a clear commitment to promoting equity in general and gender equity in particular in all aspects of it's functioning.

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The school has a capacity to change in response to pupil's needs.

The school identifies aspects of curriculum through which positive and lasting influences can be exerted towards forming pupil's attitudes and values.

The school recognises the need to work in partnership with and keep parents informed on procedures to improve relationships on a school-wide basis.

The school recognises the role of parents in equipping the pupil with a range of life-skills.

The school recognises the role of other community agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying.

The school promotes habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the interdependence of people in groups and communities.

The school promotes qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among all its members both in school and out of school.

Staff members share a collegiate responsibility, under the direction of the Principal, to act in preventing bullying/aggressive behaviour by any member of the school community.

4. Investigating and dealing with bullying.

The relevant teacher for investigating and dealing with bullying is the Class teacher.

The matter will be reported to the Principal and/or Deputy Principal. Substitute teachers and the teacher on yard supervision may also be involved in investigating and dealing with bullying.

5.1 The education and prevention strategies that will be used by the school are as follows:

- The SPHE curriculum, including the Walk Tall, Bardardos (Parenting Positively-Coping with bullying for children) and Stay Safe Programmes, is used throughout the school to support the anti-bullying policy.
- Positive self-esteem is fostered among the pupils by celebrating individual differences, by acknowledging good behaviour and by providing opportunities for success.
- Pupils are helped to develop empathy by discussing feelings and by trying to put themselves in the place of others. (Circle Time)
- Teachers respond sensitively to pupils who disclose incidents of bullying.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed regularly with the pupils.
- Staff are particularly vigilant in monitoring pupils who are considered at risk of bullying/being bullied, with particular regards to pupils with SEN.
- All disclosed incidents of bullying are investigated.
- Members of the BOM are familiar with the school's policy on bullying and promote it through the roles of the Board Members in the school, by reviewing the policy with input from all stakeholders in the school community, by example and by promoting and improving communication and supporting the Principal in ensuring the Policy is adhered to.
- Parents contribute to and support the school's policy on bullying by encouraging positive behaviour both at home and at school, by being vigilant for signs and symptoms that their child is being bullied or is bullying others, by communicating concerns to the school.
- Cyber-Bullying requires access to technology. Pupils are supervised at all times when working with technology in the school. Pupils are not allowed mobile phones in school.
- The Catholic Ethos of the school encourages positive attitudes to inclusivity and equality. This permeates all aspects of the school day and throughout the teaching of the curriculum.

5.2. Maintaining awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour.

Forgney National School will emphasise and reinforce the view that bullying behaviour is unacceptable by:

- Using formal and informal lesson time to remind pupils of the school's anti-bullying policy.
- Using both the formal and informal curriculum to emphasise that bullying is unacceptable.....visual arts activities, posters, drama, role play, SPHE, co-operative games E.g. anti-bullying slogan competition, anti-bullying posters designed by the students
- Annual launch of the school's care credit system in September.

5.3. Supervision

Insofar as is reasonably practicable school activities will be supervised and monitored at all times, with particular emphasis on those occasions when situations of bullying are more likely to occur, such as play time and dismissal time.

6.1. Procedures for Dealing with Instances of Bullying:

- 1) All incidents of bullying will be recorded on a bullying referral sheet which will be retained in the school.
- 2) Pupils will be informed that when they report incidents of bullying they are acting responsibly.
- 3) A calm unemotional problem solving approach will be used to deal with bullying.
- 4) A class survey will be conducted to try and establish the facts relating to the alleged bullying.
- 5) On being informed of an alleged incident of bullying, the teacher dealing with the report will first interview the victim(s) and discuss the feelings which the victim(s) experienced because of the bullying behaviour. This investigation should take place outside of the class situation to ensure the privacy of all concerned.
- 6) An interview will then take place with the alleged perpetrator(s).
- 7) Incidents of bullying will initially be dealt with by the class teacher. Incidents that are of a serious nature or those that involve pupils from a number of classes will be referred to the Principal. If the bullying involves a group of pupils, members of that group will first be met individually and then as a whole. Having discussed the negative impact which bullying has on both perpetrators(s) and victims(s) responsibility will be placed on all individuals within the group to resolve the difficulty and to take appropriate steps to ensure that it does not happen again.
- (8) If at the conclusion of the preliminary investigation the teacher is convinced that bullying has occurred the Principal will contact the parents of all involved.
- (9) The perpetrator(s) will be asked to sign a promise not to engage in bullying again. This promise will be witnessed by their parents.
- (10) If this fails the schools policy on dealing with serious misbehaviour (as contained in the school's Code of Behaviour) will be implemented. Where a once off bullying incident is considered to be of a very serious nature the above policy on serious misbehaviour will also be implemented.
- (11) It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and 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.

(12) Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved could be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupils who has been bullied is ready and agreeable. This can have a therapeutic effect.

(13) 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.

(14) 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.

6.2 Bullying as part of a continuum of behaviour

Bullying behaviour can be 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 or sexual assault or harassment. The school may refer cases to relevant external agencies and authorities where appropriate. In cases where the 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 and advice may also be sought from the HSE Children and Family Social Services with a view to drawing up an appropriate response, such as a management plan.

Further supports for pupils affected by bullying behaviour, All pupils who have been involved in bullying behaviour will be supported in the first instance by the class teacher. If required opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self esteem and self worth will be organised. Further interventions where appropriate will be put in place on a case by case basis.

7. 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 of pupils or staff or the harassment of pupils or staff on any of the nine grounds specified:

Gender –transgender - Civil Status - Family Status - Sexual orientation,
Religion - Age - Disability - Race - Membership of the traveller community

8. This Policy was adopted and ratified by Forgney National School Board of Management on Date: 24th September 2018

Reviewed on: 15th June 2021 & signed by Fr. O. Devine

Reviewed on: 15th June 2022

Reviewed on: 20/09/2022 - Reviewed on 19/09/2023

Signed:  Chairperson – Forgney BOM
Fr. Oliver Devine

9. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website, readily available in the school office and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

10. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the BOM 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, readily available to parents and pupils on request 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.


Forgney National School

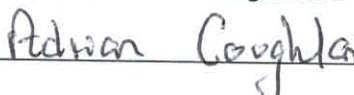
Appendix 4

Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation

The Board of Management of Forgney National (Board) must undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation. The following checklist must be used for this purpose. The checklist is an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. In order to complete the checklist, an examination and review involving both quantitative and qualitative analysis, as appropriate across the various elements of the implementation of the school's anti-bullying policy will be required.

	Yes
/No	
Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools</i> ?	
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	
Is the Board satisfied that school staff are sufficiently familiar with the policy and procedures to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy and procedures in their day to day work?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	
Has the Board discussed how well the school is handling all reports of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and not therefore included in the Principal's periodic report to the Board?	
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	
Has the data available from cases reported to the Principal (by the bullying recording template) been analysed to identify any issues, trends or patterns in bullying behaviour?	
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	

Signed  Date 19.9.23
 Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed:  Date 19.9.23
 Principal


Forgney National School

Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the anti-bullying policy

To: Whom it may concern

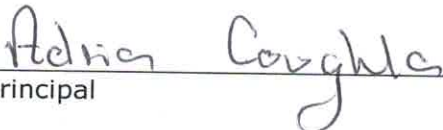
The Board of Management of Forgney National School wishes to inform you that:

- The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its
- implementation was completed at the Board meeting of 19th September 2023.
- This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in **Appendix 4** of
- the Department's *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Signed 

Date 19.9.23

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed 
Principal

Date 19.9.23