Robinstown N.S. Antibullying Policy

Introductory Statement

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 **Robinstown 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.

The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact 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 disclosed and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
  - 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; 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); and
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

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.

Types of Bullying

The following are some of the types of bullying behaviour that can occur amongst pupils:

Physical aggression: This behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While pupils often engage in 'mess fights', they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.

Intimidation: Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation: it may be based on the use of very aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon. Particularly upsetting can be a facial expression which conveys aggression and/or dislike.

Isolation/exclusion and other relational bullying: This occurs where a certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or all of the class group. This practice is usually initiated by the person engaged in bullying behaviour and can be difficult to detect. It may be accompanied by writing insulting remarks about the pupil in public places, by passing around notes about or drawings of the pupil or by whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard. Relational bullying occurs when a person's attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. One of the most common forms includes control: "Do this or I won't be your friend anymore"(implied or stated); a group ganging up against one person (girl or boy); non-verbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumours about a person or giving them the "silent treatment".

Cyber-bullying

Cyber-bullying is deliberately hurting someone's feelings using information and communication technology such as:

Emails; Mobile phones; Instant messaging; Social networking sites; Chat rooms; Blogs; Online gaming sites; Online polling sites

Protect yourself from Cyber-Bullying

- Hide your personal details.
- React appropriately to hurtful or nasty messages.
- Block the sender of hurtful or nasty messages.
- Set networking sites and profiles to "PRIVATE".
- Save nasty links, texts, messages and emails.
- Never open messages from someone you don't know.
- Always ask permission before revealing someone else's details.
- Only give details to trusted friend you know in real life.
- Do not give your password to anyone (with the exception of parents/guardians).
- Change your password often.
- Follow netiquette – communicate clearly, use emoticons and be polite.

ALWAYS REPORT CYBER-BULLYING IMMEDIATELY TO A TRUSTED ADULT

If a disclosure of cyber bullying is made to a member of staff and a child in the school is implicated, this matter will be dealt with in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy. If a disclosure is made by a member of the school community and it concerns another party outside school community this matter will be immediately reported to the Gardaí

Name calling: Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) which hurts, insults or humiliates should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name-calling of this type refers to physical appearance, e.g., size or clothes worn. Accent or distinctive voice characteristics may attract negative attention. Academic ability can also provoke name calling. This tends to operate at two extremes. There are those who are singled out for attention because they are perceived to be weak academically.
At the other extreme there are those who, because they are perceived as high achievers, are also targeted.

Identity based bullying: Such as homophobic and transphobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a persons membership of the Travelling community

Damage to property: Personal property can be the focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, school books and other learning material or interference with a pupil's locker or bicycle. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.

Extortion: Demands for money may be made, often accompanied by threats (sometimes carried out in the event of the targeted pupil not delivering on the demand). A pupil may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to another who is engaged in bullying behaviour.

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.

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

Procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying

(i) The primary aim for the relevant teacher 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 (rather than to apportion blame);

(ii) 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;

(iii) All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. 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;

(iv) Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;

(v) 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 relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible;

(vi) It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset;

(vii) Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents;

(viii) Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;

(ix) 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 very useful information in this way;

(x) When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner;

(xi) 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/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements;

(xii) Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face them from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher;

(xiii) It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s);

(xiv) In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents 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). The school should give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils;

(xv) Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;

(xvi) 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;

(xvii) Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should 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;

(xviii) In cases where the relevant 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, it must be recorded by the relevant teacher in the recording template.

(xix) 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;

(xx) 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;

(xxi) 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.

The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber- bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:

A School-Wide Approach

A school-wide approach (involving school management, staff, parents and pupils) to dealing with the problem of bullying behaviour is a key element of effective practice. Bullying behaviour affects not only those immediately involved. It can affect everyone in the classroom, in the school and, ultimately, in the wider community.

A positive school-wide attitude and involvement can assist considerably in countering bullying behaviour in schools. In addition to the role of management and staff, 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 bullying behaviour that occurs elsewhere. Parents should also recognise that a school that openly discusses bullying is acting positively and that they need to work with their school to ensure there is a coherent, school-wide approach to tackling the issue.

Implementation of education and prevention strategies including awareness raising.

- Drama based workshop on bullying bi-annually
- Outside speakers from professional agencies to speak to students and Parents on Cyber-Bullying
- Speaker from professional agencies to speak to staff, parent body & students on bullying.
- Stay Safe Programme
- Walk Tall Programme
- Friendship Awareness Week (every November)
- Pupil of the Week Award
- Integrated lessons across curriculum – P.E., English, Religion, SPHE, R.S.E.
- Provide opportunities across the curriculum where children are working in groups in a co-operative manner.
- Staff Training
- "Hotspots" and "Hot times" very carefully monitored.
- More Vulnerable (awareness among staff of possible bullies and bullied) pupils identified and awareness heightened amongst staff.
- Modelling of respectful behaviour and language by teachers and staff.

Procedures for recording bullying behaviour

(i) While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant 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;

(ii) 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 practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

(iii) The relevant teacher must use the recording template at Appendix 3 to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

a) in 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; and
b) in certain circumstances the teacher may immediately inform the principal of a bullying behaviour. In this case the recording template is used and a copy given to the principal.
In each of the circumstances at (a) and (b) above, the recording template at Appendix 3 must be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal as

applicable. It should also be noted that the timeline for recording bullying behaviour in the recording template at Appendix 3 does not in any way preclude the relevant teacher from consulting the Principal or Deputy Principal at an earlier stage in relation to a case.

Report to the Board of Management: The Principal will provide a report to the Board of Management setting out:

- the overall number of bullying cases reported (by means of the bullying recording template in Appendix 3) to the Principal or Deputy Principal since the previous report to the Board and

- Confirmation that all of these cases have been, or are being, dealt with in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy and these procedures.

<u>**The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:**</u>

Victims

- Victims are reassured from the outset that they are not to blame.
- Strategies for restoring self-esteem are explored between teacher and parents/guardian.
- Where deemed necessary, the child in consultation with parents may be referred for counselling.
- Staged approach-class support, school support (as per Continuum-Behavioural, Emotional and Social difficulties-NEPS)
- Victims may be chosen for Drama Therapy sessions.
- The parents of the pupils concerned will be advised to contact the local Gardaí if appropriate.

Bullies

- Where deemed necessary, the child in consultation with parents may be referred for counselling. They may need to learn other
- Ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others. Empathy awareness needs to be developed.
- Bullies may be chosen for Drama Therapy sessions.
- Clinical referral and assessment may be necessary.
- Staged approach-class support, school support (as per Continuum-Behavioural, Emotional and Social difficulties-NEPS)

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.

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 ie. Gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Travelling community.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____ (date).

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, is otherwise readily accessible to parents on request). A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

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 (or where none exist, be otherwise readily accessible to parents 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.

Communication of policy

As stated in Section 1.3.3, the school's anti-bullying policy must be made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, be otherwise readily accessible to parents on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A copy of the school's anti-bullying policy must be provided to the Department and the patron if requested.

The Board of Management must ensure that the policy is regularly highlighted and promoted on a school-wide basis with particular attention being given to incoming pupils and their parents. School management must ensure that pupils, parents and staff members are made aware of the relevant teachers responsible for dealing with bullying concerns. School rules and other information on bullying should be provided in pupil friendly, age appropriate formats and should be displayed around the school building.

Signed: _____   Signed: _____
        (Chairperson of Board of Management)   (Principal)

Date: _____6/12/23_____

Date of next review: _____6/12/24_____