

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 Lumclon 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. 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;

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

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 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.

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.

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows:

In Lumcloon N.S., the "relevant teacher" is the class teacher.

In the event that a teacher is accused of bullying either a child or another adult, the agreed Complaints Procedure "Revised Procedures for Suspension and Dismissal of Teachers

Section 24(3) of the Education Act (1998)" will be invoked.

5. 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 :

Lumclon N.S. will promote a preventative approach to bullying by implementing the following:

- Developing a whole school Anti Bullying Policy in collaboration with the whole school community of all staff, pupils, parents and Board of Management.
- All teachers will implement the schools Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) programme in full. (This includes the Stay Safe, RSE, Walk Tall and Alive-O programmes).
- A copy of the school's Anti-bullying Policy and Code of Behaviour will be provided to the parents of all incoming pupils. Parents/guardians will be required to sign an undertaking which supports these policies. The revised policy will be circulated to all current parents and an undertaking of their support for the policy will be sought.
- The Anti-bullying Policy and Code of behaviour will be available on-line to all parents and others on the school website: www.lumclon.net.
- A hard copy of the school's Anti-bullying Policy and Code of Behaviour will be available to parents and others on request from the school Office.

The following anti-bullying initiatives will take place in the school annually:

- Where the opportunity arises, guest speakers with an expertise in the area of bullying-prevention, will be invited to address pupils, staff and parents.
- Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.
- Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.
- Catch pupils being good - notice and acknowledge 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 pupils with a disability or SEN.
- Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.
- Through appropriate use of the school blog and Twitter etc. the pupils are both explicitly and implicitly taught appropriate and responsible use of social media and the Internet.

- Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use.
- Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.
- Actively involve parents and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media.
- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.
- Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.
- All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- Ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.
- School staff can get pupils to help them to identify bullying "hot spots" and "hot times" for bullying in the school.
 - Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas, changing rooms, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision.
 - Hot times again tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when pupils are in the playground/school yard or moving classrooms.

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 are as follows:

Procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying

Lumcloon N.S.'s procedures are consistent with the following:

- 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);
- 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;
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will 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 will 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;
- Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners will be encouraged to 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 relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible;
- It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset;
- Teachers will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents;
- Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
- 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;
- 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;
- 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;
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher;
- It may also be appropriate or helpful in certain situations to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s);
- 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;
- 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;
- 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;
- 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 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 relevant standard recording template;
- 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;
- In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school shall advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Procedures for recording bullying behaviour

All records of bullying behaviour will be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour will adhere to the following:

- 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;
- 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.
- The relevant teacher must use the standard recording template 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) where the school has decided as part of its anti-bullying policy that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

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 standard recording template 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.

Referral of serious cases to outside agencies

It is also important to note that 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. To ensure that any such cases are dealt with appropriately, Lumcloon National School's anti-bullying policy at all times links into the school's code of behaviour. We acknowledge that referral to external agencies and authorities (where appropriate) may at times be necessary. In cases where our 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.

In relation to bullying in schools, Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011 (Children First) and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools provide that in situations where "the incident is serious and where the behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive, the school must consult the HSE Children and Family Social Services with a view to drawing up an appropriate response, such as a management plan".

Serious instances of bullying behaviour should, in accordance with the Children First and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, be referred to the HSE Children and Family Services and/or Gardaí as appropriate.

The Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools also provide that where school personnel have concerns about a child but are not sure whether to report the matter to the HSE, the Designated Liaison Person must seek advice from the HSE Children and Family Social Services.

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying was developed with the help of our school's assigned NEPS psychologist, who gave us advice on guidance on the design of this programme. The HSE publication "Investigating and Resolving Bullying in School – Further Steps for Teachers. The Cool School Programme" was also used as a resource in the development of this approach.

- A programme of support for pupils who have been bullied is in place. Such pupils may need counselling 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 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. Learning strategies applied within the school will allow for the enhancement of the pupil's self-worth. 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.
- Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour will be encouraged to discuss them with teachers.

Programme of Support

Where a breach of the Anti Bullying Policy occurs, it is important that the perspective of the bully and the victim are both taken into account. Programmes of support will be available for all pupils involved in bullying.

At present there is no universally accepted technique for dealing with bullying. As complex clusters of behaviours are involved, responding often requires sensitive decision-making to suit specific cases. Current practice varies from school to school, and can be dependent on the personal skills and interests of individual teachers. The staff of Lumcloon N.S. have committed to availing of training in the area of supporting pupils affected by bullying if such becomes available. In the meantime, we are implementing the model below based on current research and advice received from NEPS.

A useful framework for dealing with bullying behaviour is offered by the concept of Restorative, as opposed to Retributive Justice. This contrasts the traditional model of apportioning blame and applying punishment with a more holistic view, which seeks to restore the balance of relationships between pupils in school. The process of dealing with bullying incidents in school does not have to be draconian. In addition to supporting victims a restorative model also takes into account the needs of the person who is bullying.

In this approach, a misdemeanour is seen as violation of one person's rights by another. There is a focus on problem-solving by expressing feelings and needs first, and then on how to meet those needs. Dialogue and negotiation is central to the process, with everyone involved listening to each other. Reconciliation and restoration are the goals in the process. Accountability is defined as understanding the impact of the action, deciding to put things right and making reparation. Misdemeanours are recognised as interpersonal conflicts and the value of conflict as potential opportunity for learning is recognised. As part of our Anti-Bullying Policy, we are committed to the use of a restorative model in addressing the needs of both the bully and the victim in situations where bullying has been identified.

Restorative Practices

Restorative practices are designed to restore damaged relationships between individuals or groups. They require that the 'offender' acknowledges wrongdoing and the harm he or she has caused, and then acts restoratively, e.g. through an apology and compensatory action.

This approach may be applied at a conference at which the offender(s) and 'target(s)' meet, e.g. at a meeting at which the 'bully' and the 'victim' are present. For the latter, here is a possible script.

The practitioner follows the script given below with partners playing the parts of 'bully' and 'victim.'

1. In the presence of the victim, 'the bully' is asked the following questions:

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

2. The practitioner now switches to the victim:

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

3. Next, it is back to the bully:

- What do you think you need to do to make things right?
- How can we make sure this doesn't happen again?

After a restorative action has been suggested, undertaken and (importantly) accepted by the target, the case may be concluded, though the situation may continue to be monitored.

(Adapted from Rigby, K (2010) *Bullying interventions in schools: Six major methods*. Camberwell: ACER).

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. See Supervision Policy.

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 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.

10. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____.

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). 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. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, be otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed:

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed:

(Principal)

Date:

Date:

Date of next review:
