# Lumcloon National School

**Lumcloon National School**
**Lumcloon**
**Cloghan**
**Birr**
**Co. Offaly**
**R42 Y744**

## 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 Lumcloon 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
        o   is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity.
        o   encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
        o   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-
        o   build empathy, respect, and resilience in pupils; and
        o   explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and trans phobic 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.  **Defining Bullying**
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.

Examples of bullying behaviours are available at appendix 1.

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. **Relevant Teachers**

The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:
(see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools)

- The Principal
- The Deputy Principal
- The Assistant Principals
- Class teachers

Any teacher may act as the relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

**Education and Prevention Strategies**

The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber- bullying, homophobic and trans phobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows
(see Section 6.5 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary School)

- Promoting a positive sense of self-worth and building empathy and resilience in pupils:
  - Random Acts of Kindness read out at assembly each week.
  - Rewarding incidents of good and improved behaviour at a whole school level through the presentation of student of the week certificates in assembly.
  - Extracurricular activities available for all pupils.
  - Formal and informal interactions.
  - Celebration of International Day.
  - Celebration of Friendship Week.
  - Development of Buddy Programmes in order to help support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
  - Development of the use of a Friendship/Buddy Bench, received from Buddy Bench Ire- land.
  - Fun Friends Programme targeted at a class level each year.
- Cyber bullying:
  - Promoting awareness of Lumcloon N.S. Acceptable Use Policy and ensuring that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored, as is the pupils' use of mobile phones.
  - Communicating the message that unlike other forms of bullying, a once-off posting can constitute bullying.
  - Advice will be communicated to help students protect themselves from being

involved in bullying and to advise them on reporting any incidents. A telling atmosphere is created, so that pupils will report cyber bullying where they see it.
- o Publicising ways of dealing with cyber bullying in the school.
- o Don't reply.
- o Keep the message.
- o Block the sender.
- o Tell someone you trust.
- o Promoting 'Internet Safety Day' annually and activities to celebrate this awareness.
- o Teaching of lessons to deal with the issues of cyber bullying and internet safety.
- o Gardaí will visit the school to talk about cyber bullying.
- o Parent(s)/guardian(s) of children from 5th and 6th classes to receive 'A Parents' Guide to a Better Internet', published by Webwise.
- o Parent(s)/guardian(s) and students are advised that it is illegal for a child under 13 to register with and use many social media networks.

Our school's approach to tackling and preventing bullying takes account of the needs of pupils with SEN and joins up with other relevant school policies and supports and will ensure that all services and supports and will ensure that all the services that provide for such pupils work together. Approaches to decreasing the likelihood of bullying for pupils for pupils with SEN include improving inclusion, focusing on developing social skills, paying attention to key moments such as transitioning from primary to post-primary and cultivating a good school culture which has respect for all and helping one another as central.
Initiatives and programmes focused on developing pupils' awareness and understanding, including its causes and effects, will deal with explicitly with the issue of identity-based bullying. Where issues of identity-based bullying arise, the school will deal with them at an individual, group, class, or whole school context in consultation with the parents/guardians of the children involved. The ethos of the school and the age and stage of the children's development will be taken into consideration.
Identify clear protocols to encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied. The protocol should be developed in consultation with parents.
The development of an Acceptable Use Policy in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored, as is the pupils' use of mobile phones. Smart watches are prohibited in Lumcloon N.S.
The listing of supports currently being used in the school and the identification of other supports available to

**Implementation of the curricula**
- • Teachers influence attitudes to bullying behaviour in a positive manner through a range of curricular initiatives. There are several curriculum components and programmes which are particularly relevant to the prevention of bullying and the promotion of respect for diversity and inclusiveness.
  - o SPHE curriculum makes specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the inter-related areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships.
  - o The Stay Safe programme is a personal safety skills programme which seeks to
  - o enhance children's self-protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying. Each teacher signs off on a sheet when they have taught all thirteen Stay Safe lessons. This content is also shown in Cuntas Míosúil.
  - o RSE aims to provide opportunities for children to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring and responsible way.

- Other resources and programmes include: PDST Anti-Bullying Support Material, Prim-Ed Cyber Bullying Packs, Webwise Cyber Bullying Pack, Webwise My Selfie Lessons, Fun Friends, Walk Tall.the school (please see attached)

**Links to other policies:**

The school policies which support the Anti-Bullying policy are:
- Code of Behaviour
- Child Protection Policy
- Supervision of pupils
- Acceptable Use policy
- Attendance
- Sporting activities
- Social Media policy
- RSE Policy
- SPHE Policy

5. **Procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying**

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 (see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools)

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, rather than to apportion blame.

The school's procedures must be consistent with the following approach. Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parent(s)/guardians) understand this approach from the outset.

**Reporting Bullying Behaviour**

Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may report a 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 such as secretaries, special needs assistants, bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them or mentioned to them by the relevant teacher.

**Procedures for investigating, dealing with and recording incidents of Bullying are 3 staged:**

### Stage 1
- **Informal Investigation and Action**
    - In investigating and dealing with incidents of alleged bullying, the relevant teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
    - Teachers will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach (modelling appropriate behaviour of how we act when dealing with unpleasant situations) when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff, or parents.

- **Informal Recording, predetermination that bullying has occurred**
    - All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher. These records will be kept in the office. An incident record sheet is available at **appendix 2**.
    - While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher must keep a written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.
    - The relevant teacher must inform the principal of all incidents being investigated.

### Stage 2
- **Formal Investigation and Action**
    - 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.
    The parent(s)/guardian(s) 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 parent(s)/guardian(s) an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the pupils.
    - It must also be made clear to all involved that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school.
    - Discipline sanctions used will be in line with the school code of behaviour, including the possibility of suspension/expulsion.
    - Parent(s)/guardian(s) 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.
    - Where possible incidents should be 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.
- Group meetings and/or individual meetings may be held.
- 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 or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s).

- **Formal Recording**
   - 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 and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
   - These records will be kept in a locked filling cabinet and a unique identifier will be used to protect the children's identity.
   - Asking children to stay away from each other is not great practice.

### Stage 3
- **Formal Investigation**
   - In cases, where the relevant teacher considers that 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 at **appendix 3.**

   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 practicable.
      - Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far is practicable.
      - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardian(s) or the Principal or Deputy Principal.

- **Formal Recording**
   - The relevant teacher must use the recording template at **appendix 3** to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:
      - 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: and

- Where the school has decided as part of its anti-bullying policy thatin certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.
- When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher and a copy maintained by the Principal. The Appendix 3 folder is stored in the office.
- These records will be kept until all the children involved reach the age of 21.

**Follow up**

- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should be arranged separatelywith a view to possibly bringing them together later if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.

- Where a parent(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied that the school has not dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian(s) mustbe referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
  If a parent(s)/guardian(s) has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise parent(s)/guardian(s) oftheir right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

**Established intervention strategies, in line with:**
- Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress. Thiscan be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process
- Working with parent(s)/guardian(s)s to support school interventions
- No Blame Approach
- Circle Time
- Introduction of Restorative Practice
- Implementing sociogram questionnaires
- The school code of behaviour
- Strengthening the victim
- Mediation

6. **The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows: (see Section 6.8.16 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools)**
- All in-school supports, and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullyingto participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience
  - Social skills groups
  - Buddy Programmes
  - Fun Friends Programme
  - Group work such as Circle Time
- If pupils require counselling or further supports, the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.
- Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents ofbullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

7. **Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils**

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies andPractices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

8. **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.

9. This policy was initially adopted by the Board of Management on 07/04/2014
   It was reviewed in April 2015, May 2016, March 2017, February 2018 and April 2020.
   It was ratified by the Board of Management on 11/05/2020.

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

11. 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, 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.


**Signed:** _____    **Signed:** _____

Chairperson of Board of Management    Principal

**Date:**    **Date:**


**Date of next review:** September 2022