

# *Fermoy Adair National School.*

## *Anti - Bullying Policy*

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## **Introductory Statement:**

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the Code of Behaviour guidelines issued by the N.E.W.B., the Board of Management of Fermoy Adair 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.

This policy is based on the DES guidelines "Countering Bullying Behaviour". It aims to produce a safe and caring environment in which all children can develop to their full potential.

The school does not tolerate or condone bullying of any form. 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 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.

## **Board of Management:**

The Board of Management is responsible for ensuring that all members of the school community are enabled to deal effectively with bullying. The Board is committed to providing time and resources for the implementation of the policy. The Board will ensure that proper supervisory and monitoring measures are in place to prevent

bullying and to deal with incidents appropriately as they arise.

### **School Staff:**

The school staff will foster an atmosphere of friendship, respect and tolerance. Children's self-esteem will be developed through celebrating individual differences, achievements, acknowledging curriculum and school. Teachers will help pupils to develop empathy by discussing feelings and trying to put themselves in the place of others. Relationships with pupils will be based on mutual respect and trust so that pupils will have confidence in the school staff. Teachers will be vigilant, respond sensitively and caringly to pupils who disclose incidence of bullying and they will investigate these disclosed incidents of bullying.

Teachers will discuss the school's anti-bullying policy with the pupils and use behavioural management strategies which focus on problem solving and enable pupils to take an active role in finding a solution to problems.

The formal curriculum of the school will also be used to educate all pupils against bullying behaviour. Anti-bullying issues may be raised through the school religion programme, the Social Personal and Health Education programme, the Stay Safe Programme, the Arts and/or Circle time.

### **Pupils:**

Pupils are expected to be tolerant and to have mutual respect for each other. Pupils should report incidents of bullying to their parents and teachers. Pupils are taught to treat others as they themselves would wish others to treat them.

### **Parents:**

- Encourage positive behaviour and discourage negative behaviour both at home and at school.
- Encourage children to solve difficulties without resorting to aggression.
- Encourage children to share, to be kind, to be caring, and to be understanding towards others.
- Watch out for signs and symptoms that your child is being bullied or is bullying others.
- Don't dismiss your instincts as being wrong.
- Discuss the school's anti-bullying policy with her/him
- Support the school in its efforts to prevent and treat bullying.

### **Definition of Bullying:**

Bullying may be defined as repeated acts of aggression or unwanted negative behaviour; which may be verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against others.

The term bullying describes anti-social acts such as assaults, extortion, intimidation and violence. It is a conscious desire of one child or group of children to hurt another, over a period of time. (Tattum, D. 1989)

Bullying may take many different forms physical, verbal and social such as:

- physical aggression,
- constant hitting, jostling and pushing around
- damage to, theft of or constant interference with another's property
- extortion,
- intimidation,
- abusive telephone calls,
- deliberate exclusion or isolation of a child by another child or group of children,
- name calling,
- gossip,
- writing notes or sending derogatory drawings,
- emailing or texting and through other forms of social media,
- persistent derogatory remarks (about clothing, appearance, school work, family circumstance, abilities etc)
- Identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, sectarian based bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

As a form of aggressive behaviour it is usually **hurtful** and **deliberate**. It is **persistent, repeated** over time and makes it difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

It is important not to confuse bullying with isolated incidents of aggressive or antisocial behaviour. When aggressive behaviour is **systematic and ongoing** it becomes bullying. Isolated incidents of antisocial behaviour need to be successfully dealt with before they develop into bullying.

### **All members of the school community have a role to play in the prevention of bullying:**

#### **1. Board of Management:**

The Board of Management is responsible for ensuring that all members of the school community are enabled to deal effectively with bullying. The Board is committed to providing time and resources for the implementation of the policy. The Board will ensure that proper supervisory and monitoring measures are in place to prevent bullying and to deal with incidents appropriately as they arise.

#### **2. School Staff:**

The school staff will foster an atmosphere of friendship, respect and tolerance. Children's self-esteem will be developed through celebrating individual differences,

achievements, acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour and manners and providing opportunities for success throughout the curriculum and school. Teachers will help pupils to develop empathy by discussing feelings and trying to put themselves in the place of others. Relationships with pupils will be based on mutual respect and trust so that pupils will have confidence in the school staff. Teachers will be vigilant, respond sensitively and caringly to pupils who disclose incidence of bullying and they will investigate these disclosed incidents of bullying.

Teachers will discuss the school's anti-bullying policy with the pupils and use behavioural management strategies which focus on problem solving and enable pupils to take an active role in finding a solution to problems.

The formal curriculum of the school will also be used to educate all pupils against bullying behaviour. Anti-bullying issues may be raised through the school religion programme, the Social Personal and Health Education programme, the Stay Safe Programme, the Arts and/or Circle time.

### **3. Pupils:**

Pupils are expected to be tolerant and to have mutual respect for each other. Pupils should report incidents of bullying to their parents and teachers. Pupils are taught to treat others as they themselves would wish others to treat them.

### **4. Parents:**

The parents will be encouraged to:

- Encourage positive behaviour and discourage negative behaviour both at home and at school.
- Encourage children to solve difficulties without resorting to aggression.
- Encourage children to share, to be kind, to be caring, and to be understanding towards others.
- Watch out for signs and symptoms that your child is being bullied or is bullying others.
- Don't dismiss your instincts as being wrong.
- Discuss the school's anti-bullying policy with her/him.
- Support the school in its efforts to prevent and treat bullying.

### **In order to prevent bullying we take the following steps:**

#### **1. Educational:**

- Positive affirmation - Word, gesture, comment, commendation, praise, award, privilege or communication with parent.
- Welcoming diversity - Respect, courtesy, pride, obedience and attendance.
- Formal and informal class discussions - Stay-Safe, Walk Tall, Conflict Resolution, S.P.H.E., I.T. (Cyber -Bullying)
- School Rules
- Code of Behaviour

#### **2. Behavioural:**

- **Affirming Positive Behaviour** - Positive reinforcement of good behaviour leads to better self-discipline and we place a greater emphasis on rewards and incentives than on sanctions. (see education strategies)
- **Discouraging Misbehaviour** - The purpose of sanctions and other strategies is to promote positive behaviour and discourage misbehaviour. Sanctions will be applied according to the gravity of the misbehaviour, with due regard to age and emotional development. These may include
  - Reasoning with pupil.
  - Verbal reprimand including advice on how to improve.
  - Temporary separation from peers within class and/or temporary removal to another class.
  - Prescribing extra work.
  - Loss of privileges.
  - Detention during break.
  - Communication with parents.
  - Referral to Principal.
  - Principal communicating with parents.
  - Exclusion (Suspension or Expulsion) from school (in accordance with Rule 130 of the Rules for National Schools as amended by circular and Education Welfare Act 2000)
- We realise that the playground can be an area of risk in regards to bullying. All play is carefully supervised. We encourage children to report to the teachers if anyone is constantly bothering them. Much time is given by the teachers in promoting and supervising good play practices.

### **Procedures for Reporting and Investigating Bullying Incidents:**

Bullying incidents should be reported to any teacher or staff member for investigation. This reporting may be done by the pupil, parent or a friend. All reported incidents which are serious or are part of a pattern of behaviour will be noted, investigated and treated as circumstances require. Serious cases of bullying will be reported to the Principal.

We will endeavour to follow the following steps when responding to an incident of bullying:

1. Record the repeated incidents of reported bullying.
  - ✓ Listen to complaint and decides whether or not it needs investigation.
  - ✓ Talks to each child involved, individually.
  - ✓ Talks to witnesses.
  - ✓ Decides whether a simple sanction is sufficient or whether the matter needs further ongoing attention.

- ✓ The incident is recorded in Appendix 3 or Appendix 3B
  - ✓ The incident is recorded in the Accidents and Incidents book.
  - ✓ A copy of the report cards and grievance chart is kept.
  - ✓ The Board of Management is informed at least once a term about incidences and these are discussed.
2. Gather the facts from all the relevant sources.
    - ✓ Teacher talks to other teachers to determine whether the bullying is occurring in different places, in different circumstances at different times.
    - ✓ A note is sent home to parents alerting them to the situation.
    - ✓ Children are put on weekly report cards
    - ✓ The grievance chart may be written up.
    - ✓ If necessary, a meeting with parents may be called with a view to finding a solution.
  3. Talk to the bully and child being bullied.
  - 4.

### **Responding to Bullying:**

#### **1. Support will be provided for anyone who is bullied.**

The child reporting incidents of persistent bullying will be offered an immediate opportunity to talk about their experience with their teacher or other teacher, along with continuing support when they feel they may need it. A victim will be assured that the school community will help them and put monitoring procedures in place to safeguard them. The school will inform parents/guardians of what has happened and of the measures being taken to help them, encourage them to report further incidences if they occur.

#### **2. Help and support will be sought for a bully.**

This will include speaking with them to discover why they became involved, informing their parents/guardians and continuing to work with them in order to modify their behaviour. The school code of behaviour applies to bullying.

- The bully will learn that their behaviour is unacceptable and be guided to the recognition of the effect of their actions on others. They will be helped to see things from the victim's point of view.
  - The bully will be informed that the behaviour must stop and that their behaviour will be monitored by the teachers and staff members.
  - Sanctions for their behaviour may include loss of playtime with peers for a specific amount of time, extra homework and detention.
  - The bully will be made aware that the school will inform parents/guardians of what has happened and of the measures being taken.
- In all cases where bullying is reported and dealt with the situation will be reviewed and reassessed and good behaviour will be reinforced and encouraged between the children involved as well as their peers.
  - If incidents of bullying continues over a prolonged period of time and no effort is seen to be made to change their behaviour the child's parents will be informed again and in extreme cases the Board of Management will become

involved when suspension or expulsion is considered.

If a parent suspects their child is the victim of persistent bullying as defined in this policy, they should record dates and details before making an appointment with the class teacher or Principal.

Any pupil who is involved in retaliation against a pupil who reports bullying will be subject to the school code of discipline. Incidents of bullying will be used as opportunities for re-enforcing the anti-bullying policy of the school. Follow-up meetings may be arranged to assess progress and/or restore relationships.

If the situation is not being resolved, the following procedures may act as guidelines for actions.

1. A special Individual Education Plan drawn up by the Learning Support/Resource Teachers which outlines achievable targets for the child.
2. The N.E.P.S. advisor to the school contacted and advice sought.
3. The Board of Management may insist that the parents meet with them to discuss the situation.
4. An assessment may be requested by the teacher, the Principal or the Board of Management for the child. Permission may be asked of parents so the child will be assessed through the G.P. system, the N.E.P.S. system or the private system.
5. If the incidence is considered serious by the Board of Management, the school must consult the H.S.E. Children and Family Social Services with a view to drawing up an appropriate response such as a management plan.
6. Extremely serious instances will be referred to the Gardaí.
7. The Chairperson and principal meet with the parents and explain that suspension may be the next option.
8. Suspension/Expulsion (See appendix)

**Procedures for Parents who wish to make a complaint:**

- Approach the Teacher is the first stage.
- Approach the Principal as a second stage
- Approach the Board of Management as a third stage

Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with school procedures, the parents must be referred to the school complaints procedures. In the event that a parent has exhausted the schools complaint procedure the anti-bullying policy suggests they take their complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

**Implementation and Renewal Date:**

Every member of the school community has a role to play in the implementation of the Code of Behaviour and the Anti-Bullying Policy. Rules will be kept to a minimum,

emphasis is placed on positive behaviour and sanctions will be applied in a fair and consistent manner, with due regard to the age of the pupils and to individual difference. Good behaviour will be encouraged and rewarded. Where difficulties arise, parents will be contacted at an early stage.

1. Garda visits talking about bullying and consequences.
  2. Outside experts to speak to the children and to the parents.
- We teach the Stay Safe Programme every year. This teaches the children a strategy for protecting themselves against bullies. **"Say No, Get Away, Tell."** We promote tolerance and sensitivity in the school. We discourage rudeness, gossip, boasting and bad language and encourage pupils to realise that they have a responsibility for the safety and welfare of fellow pupils. The children are encouraged to tell a teacher if they are aware of another child being bullied.
  - This policy will be implemented from the date on which it is ratified by the Board of Management. It will be reviewed yearly by those with Roles of Responsibility in consultation with other members of staff
  - See full Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedure Documents for more detailed information on the practices and procedures regarding this matter.

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Ratified by: \_\_\_\_\_ (Chairperson B.o.M.)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Appendix

## **Suspension/Expulsion:**

In the case of gross misbehaviour, where it is necessary to ensure that order and discipline are maintained and to secure the safety of the pupils, the Board may authorise the Chairperson or Principal to sanction an immediate suspension for a period not exceeding three school days, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents.

Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case, in accordance with the Rule for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000. Before suspending or expelling a pupil, the Board shall notify the Local Welfare Education Officer in writing in accordance with Section 24 of the Education Welfare Act.

Before serious sanctions such as detention, suspension or expulsion are used, the normal channels of communication between school and parents will be utilized. Where it is proposed to detain a pupil after school hours, the parents or guardians will be notified. Communication with parents may be verbal or by letter depending on the circumstances.

For gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour suspension may be considered. Parents concerned will be invited to come to the school to discuss their child's case. Aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher or pupil will be regarded as serious or gross misbehaviour.

Where there are repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed and the parents will be requested in writing to attend at the school to meet the Chairperson and the Principal. If the parents do not give an undertaking that the pupils will behave in an acceptable manner in the future the pupil may be suspended for a period. Prior to suspension, where possible, the Principal may review the case in consultation with teachers and other members of the school community involved, with due regard to records of previous misbehaviours, their pattern and context, sanctions and other interventions used and their outcomes and any relevant medical information. Suspension will be in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000.

## **Removal of Suspension/ Expulsion.**

Following or during a period of suspension, the parent/s may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. The parent/s must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the school code and the Principal must be satisfied that the pupil's reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the pupil's own safety or that of the other pupils or staff. The Principal will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the pupil if required and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class

# Appendix 1

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in this non-exhaustive definition:

(i) deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying;

(ii) cyber-bullying; and

(iii) 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.

## 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:** This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, e-mail, instant messaging (IM), apps, gaming sites, chat-rooms and other online technologies. Being the target of inappropriate or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying. As cyber-bullying uses technology to perpetrate bullying behaviour and does not require face to face contact, cyber-bullying can occur at any time (day or night). Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyber-bullying. For example, a target may be sent homophobic text messages or pictures may be posted with negative comments about a person's sexuality, appearance etc.

- ✓ **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.
- ✓ **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.

## Appendix 2

### Impacts of bullying behaviour:

Pupils who are being bullied may develop feelings of insecurity, humiliation and extreme anxiety and thus may become more vulnerable. Self-confidence may be damaged with a consequent lowering of self-esteem. While they may not talk about what is happening to them, their suffering is indicated through changes in mood and behaviour. Extreme cases of bullying may result in suicide. It is, therefore, essential to be alert to changes in behaviour as early intervention can be very effective.

Pupils who witness bullying may also be affected and may suffer in similar ways to those who are bullied. For example, pupils who witness identity-based bullying and share that identity can experience anxiety and feel under threat themselves. Pupils can also feel guilt or distress at not being able to help the person being bullied.

There are also consequences for individuals who engage in bullying behaviour. Pupils who become involved in such behaviour can be at higher risk of depression. Other possible long-term consequences may include an increased risk of developing an anti-social personality, anxiety disorders, a likelihood of substance abuse and law-breaking behaviour in adulthood and decreased educational and occupational attainment.

## Appendix 3

### Indicators of bullying behaviour:

The following signs and symptoms may suggest that a pupil is being bullied:

- (i) Anxiety about travelling to and from school e.g. requesting parents to drive or collect him/her, changing travel routes, avoiding regular times for travelling to and from school;
- (ii) Unwillingness to go to school, refusal to attend, truancy;
- (iii) Deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school;
- (iv) Pattern of physical illnesses e.g. headaches, stomach aches;
- (v) Unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour which may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or more especially after longer school holidays;

- (vi) Visible signs of anxiety or distress e.g. stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, bedwetting;
- (vii) Spontaneous out-of-character comments about either pupils or teachers;
- (viii) Possessions missing or damaged;
- (ix) Increased requests for money or stealing money;
- (x) Unexplained bruising or cuts or damaged clothing; and
- (xi) Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling him/her.
- (xii) There may be other signs depending on the individual and his/her circumstances.

The above signs do not necessarily mean that a pupil is being bullied but if repeated or occurring in combination, these signs do warrant investigation in order to establish what is affecting the pupil.

## Appendix 4

### The pupil who engages in bullying behaviour:

A significant proportion of bullying is not merely behavioural but is rooted in a lack of respect for diversity and in social inequalities. "Prejudice-based" or "identity-based" bullying can be a significant factor in bullying behaviour.

Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour tend to display aggressive attitudes combined with a low level of self-discipline. They may lack any sense of remorse convincing themselves that the other person deserves the treatment they are receiving.

Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour can be attention seeking: setting out to impress bystanders and responding to the reaction their behaviour provokes. They can lack the ability to empathise. They can appear unaware or indifferent to the other person's feelings. It is of note that pupils who exhibit bullying behaviour often suffer from a lack of confidence and have low self-esteem.

However, it must also be recognised that pupils who engage in bullying behaviour do not always intend to bully or may not recognise the potential negative impact of their words and actions on others.

It is not uncommon to find that pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may also have been bullied themselves.

### The pupil who is at the receiving end of bullying behaviour :

Any pupil through no fault of their own may be a target of bullying. It is common in the course of normal interaction for pupils to tease or taunt each other. However, at a certain point, teasing and taunting may become forms of bullying behaviour. As pupils can be particularly quick to notice differences in others, pupils who are perceived as different in some way can be more prone to encounter such behaviour. However, the pupils who are most at risk of being bullied are those who react in a vulnerable and distressed manner. The seriousness and duration of the bullying behaviour can be related to the pupil's continuing response to the verbal, physical or psychological aggression.

Pupils who are bullied often experience difficulties in speaking up about bullying. The difficulties include:

- (i) Fear of reprisals;
- (ii) Concerns about being perceived as a "tell-tale" for reporting bullying;
- (iii) Concerns about "getting into trouble" with the principal or teacher for reporting bullying;
- (iv) Not having evidence to back up a bullying allegation;
- (v) Not knowing how the matter will be dealt with by the school; and
- (vi) Not feeling fully confident of being believed.

### **More vulnerable pupils:**

While bullying can happen to any pupil, it is known that some may be more vulnerable to or at risk of experiencing bullying. Such vulnerable groups include pupils with disabilities or special educational needs, those from ethnic minority and migrant groups, pupils from the Traveller community, lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) pupils and those perceived to be LGBT and pupils of minority religious faiths.

There can be an increased vulnerability to bullying amongst pupils with special educational needs and particularly those who do not understand social cues and/or have difficulty communicating. Some pupils with complex needs may lack understanding of social situations and therefore trust everyone implicitly. Such pupils may be more vulnerable because they do not have the same social skills or capacity as others to recognise and defend themselves against bullying behaviour. Research suggests that children with disabilities and with special educational needs (SEN) are more likely to be bullied than others. Bullying can also have a more severe impact on such children. For example, some studies which compare the impact of bullying on children with and without certain disabilities, such as a speech and language difficulty, show that bullying has a greater impact on self-esteem for those with a disability.

## Appendix 5

### Key elements of a positive school culture and climate:

- ✓ 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 prohibits vulgar, offensive, sectarian or other aggressive behaviour or language by any of its members.
- ✓ The school has a clear commitment to promoting equity in general and gender equity in particular in all aspects of its functioning.
- ✓ The school has the capacity to change in response to pupils' needs.
- ✓ The school identifies aspects of curriculum through which positive and lasting influences can be exerted towards forming pupils' attitudes and values.
- ✓ The school takes particular care of "at risk" pupils and uses its monitoring systems to facilitate early intervention where necessary and it responds to the needs, fears or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner.
- ✓ 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.

## Appendix 6

### Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate :

The following are some practical tips for immediate actions that can be taken to help build a positive school culture and climate and to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour.

- ✓ 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 them 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 ignored.
- ✓ Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.
- ✓ Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.
- ✓ 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.
- ✓ Support the establishment and work of student councils.

# Appendix 7

## COMPLAINTS PROCEDURE

The INTO reached agreement in 1993 on a procedure for dealing with complaints by parents against teachers. The purpose of this procedure is to facilitate the resolution of difficulties where they may arise in an agreed and fair manner. The agreement lays out in five stages the process to be followed in progressing a complaint and the specific timescale to be followed at each stage. Please note this is a non-statutory procedure.

Only those complaints about teachers which are written and signed by parents/guardians of pupils may be investigated formally by the board of management, except where those complaints are deemed by the board to be:

- on matters of professional competence and which are to be referred to the Department of Education and Skills;
- frivolous or vexatious complaints and complaints which do not impinge on the work of a teacher in a school; or
- complaints in which either party has recourse to law or to another existing procedure.

Unwritten complaints, not in the above categories, may be processed informally as set out in Stage 1 of this procedure.

### Stage 1

1. A parent/guardian who wishes to make a complaint should, unless there are local arrangements to the contrary, approach the class teacher with a view to resolving the complaint.
2. Where the parent/guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the class teacher s/he should approach the principal with a view to resolving it.
3. If the complaint is still unresolved the parent/guardian should raise the matter with the chairperson of the board of management with a view to resolving it.

### Stage 2

1. If the complaint is still unresolved and the parent/guardian wishes to pursue the matter further s/he should lodge the complaint in writing with the chairperson of the board of management.
2. The chairperson should bring the precise nature of the written complaint to the notice of the teacher and seek to resolve the matter between the parties within five days of receipt of the written complaint.

### Stage 3

1. If the complaint is not resolved informally, the chairperson should, subject to the general authorisation of the board and except in those cases where the chairperson deems the particular authorisation of the board to be required:

- a) supply the teacher with a copy of the written complaint; and
- b) arrange a meeting with the teacher and, where applicable, the principal teacher with a view to resolving the complaint. Such a meeting should take place within 10 days of receipt of the written complaint.

#### **Stage 4**

1. If the complaint is still not resolved the chairperson should make a formal report to the board within 10 days of the meeting referred to in 3(b).
2. If the board considers that the complaint is not substantiated the teacher and the complainant should be so informed within three days of the board meeting.
3. If the board considers that the complaint is substantiated or that it warrants further investigation it proceeds as follows:
  - a) the teacher should be informed that the investigation is proceeding to the next stage;
  - b) the teacher should be supplied with a copy of any written evidence in support of the complaint;
  - c) the teacher should be requested to supply a written statement to the board in response to the complaint;
  - c) the teacher should be afforded an opportunity to make a presentation of case to the board. The teacher would be entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a friend at any such meeting;
  - d) the board may arrange a meeting with the complainant if it considers such to be required. The complainant would be entitled to be accompanied and assisted by a friend at any such meeting; and
  - e) the meeting of the board of management referred to in (d) and (e) will take place within 10 days of the meeting referred to in 3(b).

#### **Stage 5**

1. When the board has completed its investigation, the chairperson should convey the decision of the board in writing to the teacher and the complainant within five days of the meeting of the board.
  2. The decision of the board shall be final.
  3. The Complaints Procedure shall be reviewed after three years.
  4. Primary School Management or INTO may withdraw from this agreement having given the other party three months' notice of intention to do so.
- In this agreement 'days' means school days.

**Note:** The vast majority of complaints are resolved locally and informally. However, in certain circumstances, for example, where a complaint is considered to be serious in nature, or where the teacher is required to submit a written response to his/her board of management, the teacher should contact his/her INTO District Representative or INTO Head Office for advice and assistance.

## Appendix 8

The list of examples below is non-exhaustive; we may add/subtract behaviours which reflect our circumstances.

### Examples of Bullying Behaviours:

<p><b>General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc.</li> <li>• Physical aggression</li> <li>• Damage to property</li> <li>• Name calling</li> <li>• 'Slagging'</li> <li>• The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person</li> <li>• Offensive graffiti</li> <li>• Extortion</li> <li>• Intimidation</li> <li>• Insulting or offensive gestures</li> <li>• The "look"</li> <li>• Invasion of personal space</li> <li>• A combination of any of the types listed.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cyber</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Denigration:</b> Spreading rumors, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation</li> <li>• <b>Harassment:</b> Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual</li> <li>• <b>Impersonation:</b> Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name</li> <li>• <b>Flaming:</b> Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight</li> <li>• <b>Trickery:</b> Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online</li> <li>• <b>Outing:</b> Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images</li> <li>• <b>Exclusion:</b> Purposefully excluding someone from an online group</li> <li>• <b>Cyber stalking:</b> Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety</li> <li>• Silent telephone/mobile phone call</li> <li>• Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls</li> <li>• Abusive text messages</li> <li>• Abusive email</li> <li>• Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/ Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles</li> <li>• Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures</li> <li>• Abusive posts on any form of communication technology</li> </ul>

### Identity Based Behaviours:

Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).

<b>Homophobic and Transgender</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation</li><li>• Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation</li><li>• Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian...used in a derogatory manner</li><li>• Physical intimidation or attacks</li><li>• Threats</li></ul>
<b>Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background</li><li>• Exclusion on the basis of any of the above</li></ul>
<b>Relational</b>	<p>This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Malicious gossip</li><li>• Isolation &amp; exclusion</li><li>• Ignoring</li><li>• Excluding from the group</li><li>• Taking someone's friends away</li><li>• "Bitching"</li><li>• Spreading rumours</li><li>• Breaking confidence</li><li>• Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear</li><li>• The "look"</li><li>• Use or terminology such as 'nerd' in a derogatory way</li></ul>
<b>Sexual</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching</li><li>• Harassment</li></ul>
<b>Special Educational Needs, Disability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Name calling</li><li>• Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs</li><li>• Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying</li><li>• Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues.</li><li>• Mimicking a person's disability</li><li>• Setting others up for ridicule</li></ul>

# Appendix 11

## School-wide approach:

- 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 pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Pupils will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.
- We will endeavour to ensure the following are provided:
  - ✓ Whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develops an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it-prevention and intervention.
  - ✓ An annual audit of professional development needs with a view to assessing staff requirements through internal staff knowledge/expertise and external sources
  - ✓ Professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teacher(s)
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra- curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.
- Involvement of the children in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Buddy system, mentoring, Lunchtime Pals and other student support activities that can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parents/guardians are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school on enrolment, a copy is always available to see in the office in our policy folder.
- The implementation of regular (e.g. per year/per term/per month/per week) whole school awareness measures. Examples of this which could be considered are:
  - ✓ A dedicated notice board in the school and classrooms on the promotion of friendship and bullying prevention
  - ✓ Annual Friendship Week
  - ✓ Parents/guardians seminars
  - ✓ Annual, termly or monthly student surveys
  - ✓ Regular school assemblies by principal or deputy principal where the topic of bullying is discussed

- Encourage a **culture of telling**, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. 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.
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, examples which may be considered are:
  - Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
  - Hand note up with homework.
  - Make a phone call to the school or to a trusted teacher in the school.
  - Anti-bully or Niggle box?
  - Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
  - Administer a confidential questionnaire once a term to all pupils.
  - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Identify clear protocols to encourage parents/guardians 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.

## Appendix 12:

### The school's procedures must be consistent with the following approach:

- (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 (S.N.A.'s), 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 from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher;

(xiii) It may also be appropriate/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 at **Appendix 7**

(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; **Appendix 8**

(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.

## Appendix 13:

### **Anti-Cyber-Bullying Policy**

Fermoy Adair National School aims to ensure that children are safe and feel safe from bullying, harassment and discrimination. This school is committed to teaching children the knowledge and skills to be able to use I.C.T. effectively, safely and responsibly.

#### Understanding Cyber-Bullying:

- Cyber bullying is the use of I.C.T. (usually a mobile phone and or the internet) to abuse another person
- It can take place anywhere and involve many people
- Anybody can be targeted including pupils and school staff
- It can include threats, intimidation, harassment, cyber-stalking, vilification, defamation, exclusion, peer rejection, impersonation, unauthorized publication of private information or images etc.
- While bullying involves a repetition of unwelcome behaviour the **Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools, September 2013**, states:

*2.1.3. In addition, in the context of these procedures 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.*

#### What is Cyber-Bullying?:

There are many types of cyber-bullying. The more common types are:

1. **Text messages** - can be threatening or cause discomfort. Also included here is 'Bluejacking' (the sending of anonymous text messages over short distances using Bluetooth wireless technology)
2. **Picture/video-clips via mobile phone cameras** - images sent to others to make the victim feel threatened or embarrassed
3. **Mobile phone calls** - silent calls, abusive messages or stealing the victim's phone and using it to harass others, to make them believe the victim is responsible
4. **Emails** - threatening or bullying emails, often sent using a pseudonym or somebody else's name
5. **Chat room bullying** - menacing or upsetting responses to children or young people when they are in a web-based chat room
6. **Instant messaging (IM)** - unpleasant messages sent while children conduct real-time conversations online using MSM (Microsoft Messenger), Yahoo Chat or similar tools
7. **Bullying via websites** - use of defamatory blogs (web logs), personal websites and online personal 'own web space' sites such as You Tube, Facebook, Ask.fm, Bebo (which works by signing on in one's school, therefore making it easy to

find a victim) and Myspace - although there are others.

### **Explanation of slang terms used when referring to cyber-bullying activity:**

1. **'Flaming'**: Online fights using electronic messages with angry and vulgar language
2. **'Harassment'**: Repeatedly sending offensive, rude, and insulting messages
3. **'Cyber Stalking'**: Repeatedly sending messages that include threats of harm or are highly intimidating or engaging in other on-line activities that make a person afraid for his or her own safety
4. **'Denigration'**: 'Dissing' someone online. Sending or posting cruel gossip or rumors about a person to damage his or her reputation or friendships
5. **'Impersonation'**: Pretending to be someone else and sending or posting material online that makes someone look bad, gets her/him in trouble or danger, or damages her/his reputation or friendships
6. **'Outing and Trickery'**: Tricking someone into revealing secret or embarrassing information which is then shared online
7. **'Exclusion'**: Intentionally excluding someone from an on-line group, like a 'buddy list'

This list is not exhaustive and the terms used continue to change.

### **Aims of Policy:**

- To ensure that pupils, staff and parents understand what cyber bullying is and how it can be combated
- To ensure that practices and procedures are agreed to prevent incidents of cyber-bullying
- To ensure that reported incidents of cyber bullying are dealt with effectively and quickly.

### **Procedure to prevent Cyber-Bullying:**

- Staff, pupils, parents and Board of Management (BoM) will be made aware of issues surrounding cyber bullying through the use of appropriate awareness-raising exercises
- Pupils will learn about cyber bullying through Social, Personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E.), assemblies, friendship week activities and other curriculum projects
- The school will endeavour to engage a speaker to facilitate a workshop on cyber bullying for 5th and 6th classes on a regular basis. Classes 1st to 6th will participate in the 'Bullying in a Cyber World' programme. (The local Garda Liaison often offers this service)
- Staff C.P.D. (Continuous Professional Development) will assist in learning about current technologies
- Parents will be provided with information and advice on how to combat cyber bullying
- Pupils will sign an Acceptable Use of I.C.T. (Information and Communication Technology) contract
- Parents will be expected to sign an Acceptable Use of I.C.T. contract prior to enrolment and to discuss its meaning with their children

- Pupils and parents will be urged to report all incidents of cyber bullying to the school
- All reports of cyber bullying will be investigated, recorded, stored in the Principal's office and monitored regularly
- Procedures in our school Anti-bullying Policy shall apply
- The police will be contacted in cases of actual or suspected illegal content
- This policy will be reviewed annually. Pupils, parents and staff will be involved in reviewing and revising this policy and any related school procedure

### Information for Pupils:

#### **If you are being bullied by phone or on the Internet:**

- Remember, bullying is never your fault. It can be stopped and it can usually be traced.
- Don't ignore the bullying. Tell someone you trust, such as a teacher or parent or call an advice line.
- Try to keep calm. If you are frightened, try to show it as little as possible. Don't get angry, it will only make the person bullying you more likely to continue.
- Don't give out your personal details online - if you are in a chat room, do not say where you live, the school you go to, your email address etc. All these things can help someone who wants to harm you to build up a picture about you.
- Keep and save any bullying emails, text messages or images. Then you can show them to a parent or teacher as evidence.
- If you can, make a note of the time and date bullying messages or images were sent, and note any details about the sender
- There is plenty of online advice on how to react to cyber bullying. For example, [Ie.reachout.com](http://Ie.reachout.com) and [www.wiredsafety.org](http://www.wiredsafety.org) have some useful tips.

#### **Text/video messaging:**

- You can easily stop receiving text messages for a while by turning-off incoming messages for a couple of days. This might stop the person texting you by making them believe you've changed your phone number
- If the bullying persists, you can change your phone number. Ask your mobile service provider about this.
- Don't reply to abusive or worrying text or video messages.
- Your mobile service provider will have a number for you to ring or text to report phone bullying. Visit their website for details.
- Don't delete messages from cyber bullies. You don't have to read them, but you should keep them as evidence.

## Useful Websites:

[www.spunout.ie](http://www.spunout.ie)

[www.childnet.int.org](http://www.childnet.int.org)

[www.kidsmart.org.uk/beingsmart](http://www.kidsmart.org.uk/beingsmart)

[www.antibullying.net](http://www.antibullying.net)

[www.bbc.co.uk/schools/bullying](http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/bullying)

<http://ie.reachout.com>

[www.childline.ie/index.php/support/bullying/1395](http://www.childline.ie/index.php/support/bullying/1395)

[www.abc.tcd.ie](http://www.abc.tcd.ie)

[www.chatdanger.com](http://www.chatdanger.com)

[www.sticksandstones.ie](http://www.sticksandstones.ie)

[www.kidpower.org](http://www.kidpower.org)

Compiled in consultation with teachers, SNAs, pupils, parents/guardians and wider community

## Appendix 14:

### Adult Bullying

The Board of Management of Fermoy Adair National School seeks to provide a supportive work place where all staff are free from all forms of harassment/bullying.

All complaints relating to bullying/harassment will be taken seriously and investigated thoroughly and promptly. All parties involved will be treated with respect.

Victimisation as a result of a member of staff raising a complaint will be treated as harassment/bullying and subject to disciplinary action. Similarly, staff will be protected from victimisation or discrimination for assisting in an investigation.

#### Definition of harassment/bullying:

For the purposes of this policy the following definition of bullying/harassment is understood:-

*'Persistent offensive, abusive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, or abuse of power, carried out by an individual or a group either directly or indirectly, which makes the victim feel upset, threatened, humiliated or vulnerable, or undermines their self-confidence and which may cause them to suffer stress'*.

*Bullying /harassment is to be understood not necessarily by its intention but by the impact of the behaviour on the recipient.*

Harassment/bullying may take subtle or insidious forms, which gradually wears a person down over a period of time. Harassment may take place where there are no witnesses and victims may be afraid to make a complaint because they fear that they may not be believed or that the harassment/bullying may themselves be afraid to come forward because they fear that they too may become victims.

#### Who is involved?

Individuals or groups of people can be responsible for or be the victims of harassment/bullying. It can occur at any level in the school.

#### Forms of Bullying:

Harassment/bullying can be verbal, gesture or physical bullying, exclusion or extortion. It can be sexual, ageist, sectarian or racial in form or in undertone, or it can offend because of a person's disability. Some examples could be:-

- Using terror tactics, open aggression, threats or staring, shouting abuse or obscenities towards a colleague.
- Subjecting a colleague to unreasonable scrutiny, and being excessively critical about minor things.
- Regularly taking the credit for another person's work but never taking the blame when things go wrong.
- Undermining a person's authority.

- Maliciously removing whole areas of work responsibility from an individual or reducing her/his job to routine tasks which are below her/his skills capabilities.
- Setting individuals impossible objectives, or constantly changing the work requirements and then criticising or reprimanding the individual for not meeting those requirements or objectives.
- Deliberately withholding information which an individual requires in order to do her/his job effectively.
- Ostracising and /or marginalising an individual, dealing with an individual only through a third party, excluding the individual from discussions, decisions, etc.
- Spreading malicious rumours about an individual.
- Blocking another staff member's development.

### **Effects of harassment and bullying:**

**(a) Effects on the victim:** It is generally accepted that individuals who are constantly bullied lose their self-confidence, their self esteem and are at an increased risk of suffering stress. Stress is associated with a wide range of ill-health effects. The long term exposure to harassment/bullying can have serious effects on an individual's health. This could include resignation in order to avoid contact with the bully, or absenteeism, which in turn can have a detrimental effect on the person's career. In severe cases it can include nervous breakdown, heart attack or even suicide.

**(b) Effects on the School:** Individuals working in a climate of fear and resentment do not perform to their capabilities. The adverse effects of harassment and bullying may result in increased absenteeism, staff turnover, low morale or poor performance levels.

### **What can you do if you think you are being harassed or bullied:**

If you think you are being harassed/bullied at work, you should seek advice from any of the following "Contact people".

#### **Contact People:**

- ✓ Principal,
- ✓ Deputy Principal,
- ✓ Teachers' Representative of the Board of Management,
- ✓ INTO Staff Representative,
- ✓ Chairperson of the Board of Management,
- ✓ Nominated Board of Management member.

#### **Other specific actions you may take:**

- **Log** all incidents of bullying/harassment. **Record** dates, times and full details of the incident.
- **Write down** your feelings at the time and what your own response was.
- **Speak** to the alleged bully and make it clear that his/her behaviour is unacceptable and ask him/her to stop. If you cannot do this verbally, then do so in writing. **Keep** copies of any correspondence.

- Ascertain if there were any **witnesses** to the harassment/bullying.
- If possible **avoid** being alone with the alleged bully.

### **Procedures:**

The purpose of the policy is to deter unacceptable behaviour and to create an environment where staff can work together free from harassment/bullying.

There are two procedures for dealing with cases of alleged harassment/bullying, one informal the other formal. Individuals should familiarise themselves with the procedures below. Any of the people who are listed as 'contact people' can advise on both procedures. **If the Informal Procedure is followed and the problem persists, the complaint can then be dealt with under the Formal Procedure.**

#### **(a) Informal Procedure:**

- If an incident occurs which offends you, it may be sufficient to explain clearly to the person engaging in such behaviour that it is unacceptable. In circumstances where this is too difficult or too embarrassing to do on your own, you should seek support from one of the 'contact people'.
- If you are in any doubt as to whether a type of behaviour is harassment/bullying, do not hesitate to approach one of the 'Contact People' for advice, on an informal and confidential basis.
- Many incidents of harassment/bullying can be dealt with effectively in a informal way, as often the harasser/bully may be unaware of the affect her/his behaviour is having on others.

#### **(b) Formal Procedure:**

- Your complaint should be made in writing to the Chairperson of the Board of Management and should detail the nature of the complaint. Your chosen contact person may help you to do so. However, you have the right to initiate a formal complaint without reference to a Contact Person.
- The Board of Management will endeavor to make every effort to ensure confidentiality will be observed by everyone involved while the complaint is being investigated.
- There will be an independent investigation carried out by the Board of Management.
- The Board will set down a timetable for the completion of the investigation.
- The Board may engage personnel outside the school to assist in the fact finding investigation.
- The victim will be interviewed as will the alleged harasser.
- Separate interviews will be conducted.
- Your Contact Person or Staff Representative will provide help and support during this process if you wish.
- The investigation will be thorough, impartial and objective. It will be carried out with sensitivity and with due respect for the rights of the complainant and the alleged bully/harasser.
- The complaint and the alleged harasser/bully will have the right to the accompanied at all interviews. The alleged harasser/bully will be given full

details of the nature of the complaint and will be given the opportunity to respond. Every effort will be made to ensure that meetings are conducted sensitively.

- Strict confidentiality will be maintained throughout the investigation into the allegation. Where it is necessary to interview witnesses, the importance of confidentiality will be emphasised.
- At the completion of the investigation, a report will be prepared, which will include the nature and details of the complaint, the response of the alleged harasser, the result of the investigation and the conclusion. A copy will be sent to both the complainant and the alleged harasser.
- If the report concludes that harassment/bullying did take place, the harasser will be subject to a formal interview and the complaint will be treated as a disciplinary matter using the Board of Management's Disciplinary Procedure.
- However, in some circumstances the use of the Disciplinary Procedure may not be appropriate. In such cases the outcome could result in training, counseling and a period of monitoring and appraisal.
- If the period of appraisal is not satisfactory, then the Disciplinary Procedure may then be invoked.
- There will be a right to appeal a decision using the agreed Appeals Procedure.

*Nothing in the Formal or Informal procedure can override an employee's statutory rights.*

#### **Implementing and Monitoring the Code:**

All staff in Fermoy Adair National School have a duty to ensure that their working environment is free from harassment/bullying. For more guidance see also Working Together (INTO) [www.into.ie](http://www.into.ie)

This policy will be implemented from the date on which it is ratified by the Board of Management. It will be formally reviewed in December 2025 by those with Roles of Responsibility in consultation with other members of staff

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**Ratified by Board of Management**