



# Swords Educate Together National School

Roll Number 20145 O

## **Swords Educate Together National School 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 Swords Educate Together National School has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* which were published in September 2013.
2. The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:
  - **A positive school culture and climate which**
    - is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity.
    - encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
    - promotes respectful relationships across the school community.

*Anti-bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-primary Schools*; see Table A (6.1.5. Procedures): Key elements of a positive school culture and climate, and also Appendix 2: Practical Tips for building a school culture and climate.

- **Effective leadership**
- **A school-wide approach**
- **A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact**
- **Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that:**
  - build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
  - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- **Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils**
- **Supports for staff**
- **Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and**
- **On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.**

3. In accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* bullying is defined as follows:

Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted, by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time. The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
- cyber-bullying and
- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

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

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

### **Anti-bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-primary Schools 2.2 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, chatrooms 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.*

#### 4. Relevant Teacher

The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows: see (Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*) *Anti-bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-primary Schools* - refer to section 6.8.3 and 6.8.4.

In these procedures, the member of teaching staff who has responsibility for investigating and dealing with bullying is referred to as the "relevant teacher". At primary level, the relevant teacher will normally be the class teacher.

Class teachers will usually investigate and deal with incidents of bullying. The class teacher is required to inform the Senior Management Team (Principal, Deputy Principal, and Assistant Principals) when they are investigating an incident and on the outcome of the investigation.

**Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.**

## 5. Education and prevention and anti-bullying strategies

The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows (see Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*).

### School-wide Approach

- **Educate Together Ethos:** The Educate Together vision, mission and values help to foster good manners, courtesy and politeness. This is encouraged and reinforced at all times. SETNS recognises that, in line with our School Ethos, parents work in partnership with staff to meet legitimate expectations with regard to positive behaviour and discipline. Parents are informed about the Code of Positive Behaviour and their part in supporting it, at new parents' meetings, and through the School Information Booklet. Assemblies have a central focus on the Learn Together Programme and reward systems to reinforce the Golden Rules including individual Gold Cards and whole class Green Cards.
- **Positive Code of Behaviour:** The Education Welfare Act, Section 23 states that the Code of Positive Behaviour shall specify "the standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each student attending the school". Our Code of Behaviour comprises the following elements; A Positive Behaviour Week linked to the Educate Together Programme and Golden Rules is held in the school in September each year. Pupils are involved in creating a Class Charter for their own class, reflecting the school Code of Positive Behaviour. Teachers are encouraged to engage children in 'signing-up' to their Class Charters. Other activities include regular sessions of whole class Circle Time and Mindfulness. Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.
- **Student Council:** The Student Council represents the pupil body and gives the pupils an opportunity to become actively involved in the running of the school thus ensuring that all pupils can express their viewpoints and have their voice heard in a respectful manner in school.
- **Yard Monitors/Active Yard:** Yard Monitors are pupils from 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class appointed to support the running of active yard and pupils' participation in a variety of activities. The primary role of yard monitors is to assist the supervising teachers in providing a safe and positive environment during play times. In addition to monitoring the appropriate use of Active Yard activities and equipment, Yard Monitors may report any observed incidents of inappropriate behaviour, without delay, to supervising teachers. When such reports are made, the supervising teacher will address the occurrence with the relevant pupil(s) and inform the relevant class teacher(s) after break time. The relevant class teacher(s) will keep a record of such reports. This will be required as an evidentiary basis for further investigation, if necessary, and/or to establish a reoccurrence of behaviours or likelihood of bullying behaviour by or toward the same pupil(s).
- **Friendship Week**  
During Friendship Week there is a focus on the SETNS Friendship Contract. Whole school and class-based activities take place throughout the week to promote Friendship, Respect and the Golden Rules.

- **Buddy Bench**

This is an integral part of the school yard, signage indicating to children that if feeling lonely/ isolated during yard time, they can sit on the bench , all pupils are encouraged to join in and play once asked by another pupil. Staff monitor the friendship stop and encourage the pupils to integrate with other pupils.

- **Webwise Primary Programme:** The Webwise Primary Programme is a booklet which gives teachers assistance in teaching safe and responsible internet use. There is an inclusion of link(s) from the school website to Webwise and other relevant internet safety websites. Internet safety resources and lesson ideas are made available to teachers via Information and Communication Technology (ICT) coordinator and Information and Communication Technology /Acceptable Usage Policy (AUP).

- **Safer Internet Day (SID):** Safer Internet Day is organised by Insafe in February of each year to promote safer and more responsible use of online technology and mobile phones, especially amongst children and young people across the world. Each year its campaign is highlighted for the school community.

- **Buddy System:** Systems in place to support pupils who for whatever reason require peer support, in any of the school's settings.

- **Whole Staff Professional Development and Community Awareness**

Whole staff professional development on bullying is available 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. 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**

Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra- curricular activities. Teaching, 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.

## **Implementation of Curricula**

- **Learn Together Programme:** The foundation of our Ethos is our Learn Together Curriculum. Out of the four strands that are incorporated, each contains a number of strand units that integrate fully with our anti bullying policy;
  - *Equality & Justice* - pupils explore in detail the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), understanding their right to be treated fairly and with respect. The other crucial element is they fully understand their responsibility to treat others with respect as being equally important.
  - *Values and Ethical Perspectives* - pupils engage in self-exploration, this strand allows pupils to reflect on their actions and emotions attached. They can learn to express themselves in a more positive way. The teaching of this strand often incorporates circle time where a safe space is created where pupils can be open and honest.

- **Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) Curriculum:** Lessons are taught in all classes throughout the year. Topics covered are Self- identity; Myself and my family; Safety and Protection; Developing citizenship; My friends and other people; Taking care of my body; Growing and changing; Relating to others; Making decisions; Media Education. Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) as part of SPHE is taught in all classes in the first part of Term Two.
- **Stay Safe:** This programme is taught in the Spring Term (as per SPHE policy) to Senior Infants, 1st, 3rd and 5th classes (as per Stay Safe Programme Policy 2011)
- **SALT Programme:** This programme is taught in junior classes (or at the request of the class teacher, also in senior classes) in the 2nd part of September as part of the SPHE curriculum. SALT (Stop, Ask, Listen, Talk) is a Conflict Management Programme which aims to give children skills to help them deal with difficult situations.
- **Continuous Professional Development:** for staff in delivering these programmes.

***The following is a list of school policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to bullying;***

- Code of Behaviour, Child Protection Policy, Supervision of Pupils, Acceptable Use Policy, Enrolment and Attendance, After-School Activity Guidelines.

The school will specifically consider the additional needs of Special Educational Needs (SEN) pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately. All incidents of bullying will be recorded in an incident book which will be retained in the school. A calm unemotional problem-solving approach will be used to deal with bullying.

## **6. Procedures**

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 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). Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parent(s) /guardian(s) understand this approach from the outset.*

### **Reporting bullying Behaviour**

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.
- 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;

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

### **Investigating and dealing with incidents:**

- 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.
- Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible.
- It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset.
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.
- Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way.
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
- If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements.
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher.
- It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s).
- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy). The school should give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils.

### **Follow Up and Recording**

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.

- 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.
- Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
- In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

### **Recording of bullying behaviour:**

It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour must adhere to the following:

#### **Informal**

While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher will use his/her professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.

#### **Formal**

- If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- Protocols will be agreed for the storage all records retained by the relevant teacher.
- here the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
- It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school.

#### **Formal: Appendix 3 (*Anti-bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-primary Schools*)**

- 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 3 (See Section 6.8.10 (iii));
- The relevant teacher must use the recording template at Appendix 3 to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:
  - (a) in cases where he/she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred; and
  - (b) where the school has decided as part of its anti-bullying policy that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.



- In each of the circumstances at (a) and (b) above, the recording template at Appendix 3 must be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable. It should also be noted that the timeline for recording bullying behaviour in the recording template at Appendix 3 does not in any way preclude the relevant teacher from consulting the Principal or Deputy Principal at an earlier stage in relation to a case.

### **Record Keeping**

- When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal. Such records will be kept in a locked filing cabinet in the office safe area. The principal, deputy principal and assistant principals will have access to them, and they will be retained indefinitely.

### **7. Programme of Support**

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows (see Section 6.8 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 bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience, such as;

#### **Supports for pupil bullied and pupil engaged in bullying:**

- Pupils will be reassured for reporting the bullying incident/s and engaged in drawing up a programme of support.
- A subtle mechanism for checking in with pupils will be in place with the relevant teacher.
- The relevant class teacher and/or the SMT teacher will work on rebuilding the pupils' self-esteem within a realistic proposed timeframe. This may take place in a whole class, small group or one to one setting or a combination of these settings and may involve buddy systems or group work such as circle time.
- Regular and on-going communication to be established between parents, pupil(s), Senior Management Team (SMT) and other relevant outside agencies e.g. National Education Psychological Service (NEPS)/Health Service Executive (HSE)/Family Support Services.
- In cases where a group of pupils is involved, each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher.
- Upon the implementation of appropriate sanction(s), and subject to their subsequent behaviours, pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour shall have the opportunity for a dignified re-entry to the life and flow of the classroom and general school setting, without prejudice. Opportunities for pupil/s to contribute positively towards this process will be facilitated.
- The opportunity for pupils, who had previously engaged in bullying behaviour, will be offered with a recognised responsibility to support the school in its anti-bullying efforts. This may involve assisting the Yard Monitors, and staff in preventing, and indeed identifying, the occurrence of bullying among others in the future.

**Other:**

- 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 of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

**8. Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils**

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

- Appropriate support and monitoring systems to be established in consultation with pupil, parents and relevant class teacher e.g. buddy system, teacher observation, pupil observation.
- Typical examples of times when teacher have responsibility/authority for children other than those directly in their care are:
  - reception time/break-time on corridors/yard time/hall
  - entering and leaving the building and school grounds
  - school excursions/sporting games and events

(Note that the Schools Broadband Programme has blocked all social networking sites on the basis that they waste time and take up too much of the bandwidth which is being provided for educational purposes)

**9. Prevention of Harassment**

The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of pupils or staff or the harassment of pupils or staff on any of the nine grounds specified i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

**10.** This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2023.

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

**12.** This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parent Teacher Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.


Signed:   
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2023

Signed:   
(Principal)

Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2023

**References:**

-  DES website [www.education.ie](http://www.education.ie)
- *DES Circular 45/2013 Anti-bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-primary Schools*
- *DES Anti-bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-primary Schools: September 2013*
- *Appendix 2: Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate*
- *Appendix 3: Template for recording bullying behaviour*

