



Gortnor Abbey

Secondary School

Policy Document 21/22

Anti-Bullying Policy

2021-22

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guideline issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of Jesus and Mary Secondary school, Gortnor Abbey 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-Bully 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 bully 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: **In addition to the role of management and staff, parents and pupils have a role and responsibility in helping the school prevent and address school-based bullying behaviour and to deal with any negative impact within school of bullying behaviour that occurs elsewhere.**
- 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
- 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 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, gender based 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 will 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.

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

Deputy Principal, Principal, Year Head

The assistance of the Guidance Counsellor may also be sought as appropriate.

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

- The prevention of bullying will form an integral part of the school's approach.
- Within the teaching of all subjects teachers will endeavour to foster an attitude of respect for all: to promote the value of diversity: to address prejudice and stereotyping and to highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.

- Opportunities will be provided through curricular and extra-curricular activities to develop a positive sense of self-worth.
- This Anti-bullying policy will be regularly highlighted and promoted on a school wide basis with particular attention given to incoming students and parents.
- Students will be encouraged in class and at assemblies to raise their concerns about bullying either with mentors, a teacher they feel comfortable with, a year head, the deputy principal or principal.
- The Student Council will be actively involved and considered as a conduit for the voicing of concerns which may arise. The students will be seen as a resource in identifying “hotspots” and in assisting with counter-acting bullying.
- Senior students who act as mentors are trained to identify bullying and in the procedures to follow if they have concerns regarding bullying behaviour.
- Modules on bullying will be taught as part of SPHE Classes in
1st Year 2nd Year and 3rd Year, as part Personal development in TY
and RE in Senior Cycle
- Appropriate supervision and monitoring systems will be in place.
- In computer classes the issue of cyber bullying will be addressed. Pupils will be educated regarding appropriate on-line behaviour. All pupils will be obliged to sign the school’s AUP (Acceptable Use Policy) annually. Taking in to account the possibility of cyber bullying taking place during the school day students may only use computers when supervised. The use of mobile phones/personal media players is not allowed. (See attached policy re.cyber bullying)
- Measures taken to address homophobic and LGBT bullying will include posters being displayed and LGBT issues being addressed through subject areas dealing with bullying.

Other possible strategies

Visiting Drama Groups doing presentations on bullying
 Surveys in school
 Visiting speakers
 Student “Drop Box” in an agreed location
 Student Drama Groups/Peer mentoring

The primary aim in investigating and dealing with the alleged bullying is to resolve any issues and restore as far as practicable the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame). The approach taken is one of “Reform-not-Blame”

6. The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:
- Once an allegation of bullying is made it is investigated at the earliest opportunity and if at all possible within the same school day.
 - The investigating teacher seeks answers to what, why, where and when the alleged incident(s) occurred and who was involved in a calm manner and without apportioning blame.
 - Individual students are interviewed and a written account of what happened may be requested from the students concerned.
 - The investigating teacher keeps appropriate written records to assist in his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationship of the parties involved.
 - A first time incident is dealt with as a situation where the student has done something wrong "by mistake". The student is reminded how damaging, hurtful and unacceptable their behaviour is and asked to make a solemn promise to stop.
 - The promise to stop may be requested in writing. The decision to request this is at the discretion of the Principal/Deputy Principal
 - Parents are contacted at this stage at the discretion of the Principal/Deputy Principal.
 - Any subsequent bullying behaviour will be seen as a refusal to co-operate with the "Reform-not-Blame" anti-bullying strategy and will be dealt with under the school's Code of Behaviour with possible sanctions including detention, suspension and expulsion.
 - In any case where it is established that bullying behaviour has occurred the parents of the parties involved are contacted by the Principal/Deputy Principal to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken.
 - The Principal/Deputy Principal/Year Head records the bullying behaviour and a copy of same is held on the student's file.

Oversight Arrangements

- At least once in every school term the Principal will provide a report to the Board of Management setting out the overall number of bullying cases reported to the Principal or Deputy Principal since the previous report to the Board.
- Confirmation will be given that all of these cases have been, or are being, dealt with in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy and procedures.
- An annual review of this policy and its implementation will be undertaken by the Board of Management
- Feedback from the Student Council and Parents' Association as well as from the teaching staff will be sought on a regular basis with the ensuing information being used to inform the annual policy review.

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:

- Students affected by bullying will be followed up regularly to ensure that the bullying behaviour has stopped.
- Students may be met by the Year Head/ Deputy Principal/Principal
- Students may be referred to the Guidance Counsellor if deemed necessary
- The support of outside agencies may be sought.
- Parents may be informed of outside agencies available to support the student/s in question.

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.

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 13th June 2016.

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

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

Signed: Brendan Forde
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: Patricia Melvin
(Principal)

Date: 13/06/2016

Date of next review: May 2017

