



## Our Lady Immaculate JNS, Darndale

### **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 Our Lady Immaculate JNS has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools which were published in September 2013.
  
2. The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:
  - A positive school culture and climate which
    - is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity
    - encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment, and
    - promotes respectful relationships across the school community.
  - Effective leadership;
  - A school-wide approach;
  - A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
  - Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that-
    - build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
    - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.

- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
- Supports for staff;
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

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

Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted, by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

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

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

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

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

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

**4. The relevant teacher for investigating and dealing with bullying is as follows:**

- The relevant teacher is the class teacher or the teacher on duty if an incident occurs on yard.
- 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'
- 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
- If there is an acceptance that the behaviour constituted bullying, the matter will be brought to the attention of the principal
- 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)
- 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

**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 :**

- Positive behaviour is promoted in our school in accordance with the Discipline for Learning Policy (Appendix 1). All teachers have a Discipline for Learning pack in their classrooms.
- School rules and yard rules are explicitly taught and adhered to in every classroom and learning environment in the school. "School Rule" assemblies are held at the beginning of each year to reinforce this.
- Our school has developed an anti-bullying code of behaviour (Appendix 2). Students are taught that Our Lady Immaculate JNS is a "telling" school and that they should protect themselves and support each other by telling.
- As per our Internet Acceptable Use Policy (Appendix 3), students are supervised at all times while using the computer room. Students must have permission before accessing the internet. Filters are in place to prevent unauthorised access and social media websites are blocked. All parents are given the opportunity to sign the Acceptable Use Policy.

- Our school actively participates in Traveller Education Week each year in a celebration of the culture and customs of the Travelling community
- Infant classes engage in Aistear which promotes positive play experiences through the themes of well-being, identity and belonging, communicating and exploring and thinking (Appendix 4)
- In addition, every child participates in the following:
  - Stay Safe programme
  - RSE Programme
  - Walk Tall Programme
  - SPHE curriculum

**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:**

**INVESTIGATION**

- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated by the relevant teacher
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher will seek answers to questions of *what, where, when, who* and *why*. This will 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 will be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved will be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member will be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements
- In accordance with our Discipline for Learning policy (Appendix 1), any incidents which occur on yard are investigated by the teacher on duty and recorded in the yard book which is reviewed by the Principal.

**FOLLOW-UP**

- 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.
- If any disciplinary action is required, the Principal may refer to the system of sanctions set out in our Discipline for Learning Policy (Appendix 1)
- The parents of the parties involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to school policy). The school will 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.

- 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

#### RECORDING

- The relevant teacher will keep his/her own appropriate written records in a specified notebook which will assist his/her efforts to:
  - establish whether the behaviour in question is consistent with bullying behaviour as defined on page 2 of this policy
  - resolve the issues
  - restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved
- All cases of bullying will be dealt with within 20 school days of the relevant teacher determining that such behaviour has occurred.
- 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
  - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal
- The recording template (Appendix 5) will be used in cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within the 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying has occurred.
- Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents will be referred to the Principal.
- 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.

#### INTERVENTION

- There is adequate supervision of pupils at all times while in the school and on the yard.

- All members of the school community have a responsibility to model respectful behaviour at all times. In accordance with the NEWB publication Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, "The adults in the school have a responsibility to model the school's standards of behaviour, in their dealings both with pupils and with each other, since their example is a powerful source of learning for pupils. Parents are expected to model the standards that pupils are asked to respect."
- Pupils are explicitly taught what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- The use of discriminatory and derogatory language is consistently tackled in the school - this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN.

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

- Programmes of support are differentiated depending on individual circumstances with support from the class teacher and principal
  - Pupils being bullied may be given opportunities to participate in activities to raise self-esteem.
  - Pupils will be given strategies to deal with adverse behaviour
  - Pupils involved in the bullying behaviour will be given support to learn and develop other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others
  - Referral may be made to external agencies and authorities where appropriate
- School wide support includes;
  - Participation in the Walk Tall and Stay Safe programmes
  - After-School Clubs and Homework Club
  - Aistear in infant classrooms (see aims Appendix 4)
  - Friendship bus stop on yard
- Any reports of cyber-bullying which occur outside of the school but negatively impact the well-being of the child in school will be recorded immediately and may be investigated by the Principal as per these guidelines.

**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 \_\_\_\_\_  
[date].

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 if requested.

12. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year using a standardised checklist (Appendix 6). Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal)

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

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

**Date of next review:** \_\_\_\_\_