

School position on Bullying

The school community of Carron NS believes that each student has the right to an education free from fear and intimidation.

The school views bullying as a serious infringement of individual rights and a serious threat to the self-esteem and self-confidence of targeted pupil(s). Therefore it does not tolerate bullying of any kind.

Every report of bullying is treated seriously and dealt with, having due regard to the well being of the targeted pupil(s) and the perpetrator(s).

The immediate priority, should a bullying incident occur, is the ending of the bullying (*thereby, protecting the person(s) being targeted*) and resolving the issues and restoring the relationships involved insofar as it is practicable using a “Reform, not Blame” approach.

All pupils are expected to contribute to the creation and maintenance of a safe environment in the school. On becoming aware of any bullying situation, in or outside the school, involving members of the school community they should notify a trusted, responsible adult. **Bullying behaviour is too serious not to report.**

Pupils’ participation in school life in general is encouraged through existing school structures. Awareness of bullying, and willingness to take action to prevent or stop it, is part of this participation.

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 Carron 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;
- 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 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(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows:

Junior classes – Sinéad Arkins

Senior Classes – Mary Quealy

Ancillary staff such as the learning support teacher, school secretary, bus driver and visiting teachers will be fully apprised of any bullying incidents in the school, and will be asked to notify the class teachers if they suspect bullying. They will be expected to cooperate with the 2 class teachers in dealing with bullying. However, the class teachers hold responsibility for investigating bullying incidents.

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including) used by the school are as follows:

- The anti-bullying module of the SPHE programme as it applies during each school year

(*Stay Safe* Materials are used to support this module)

- Relevant modules from the Religious Education Programme

- Stories and poems explored as part of English or Drama,
- Cross curricular exploration of oppression and domination as encountered in history and geography
- Creation of posters, anti-bullying slogans etc through Visual Arts.
- Use of awareness –raising exercises for each class group from the Awareness-Raising Strand of the Anti-Bullying Campaign, via its website, proactively explaining the nature and variety, causes, consequences and unacceptability of bullying
 - Pupils are helped to examine the issue of bullying in a calm, rational way, outside of the tense context of particular bullying incidents. In the process they are made more aware of the nature of bullying and the various forms it can take.
 - Pupils are made aware that the consequences of bullying behaviours are always bad for those who are targeted, even if this is not always obvious at the time.
 - Pupils are encouraged to recognise, reject and report bullying behaviour, either spontaneously or through questionnaires regularly used in school
- School staff and parents (via an information sheet) are aware of the nature of bullying and the signs that might indicate a pupil is being bullied. They are encouraged to be vigilant in watching out for signs of bullying and to report any suspicions they have to the relevant class teachers. Parents will be informed of any information evenings on the topic organised by bodies such as the National Parents council or the North Clare Family Resource Centre.
- The school will hold an annual anti-bullying/friendship day.

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:

- The relevant teacher investigates all instances of reported or suspected bullying behaviour, whether these take place within or outside the school, with a view to establishing the facts and bringing any such behaviour to an end.
- The school, through the relevant teacher reserves the right to ask any pupil to write an account of what happened, as part of an investigation. This will be a standard procedure and does not necessarily imply that a pupil is guilty of misbehaviours.
- Pupils who are alleged to have been involved in bullying behaviour are interviewed by the relevant teacher to establish the nature and extent of the behaviour and any reasons for it. In the event they have been involved in bullying behaviour they are asked to sign a binding promise that they will treat all pupils fairly, equally and respectfully including the targeted pupils.
- The relevant teacher should treat bullying behaviour as behaviour that can and must be remedied. She must explain that the purpose of the investigation is not to punish perpetrators but to talk to them, to explain how harmful and hurtful bullying is and to seek a promise that it will stop. If that promise is forthcoming and is honoured there will be no penalty and that will be the end of the matter. Pupils who report bullying are not getting others "in trouble" so much as enabling them to get out of trouble into which they may ultimately get if the bullying is continued.
- When an investigation is completed and a bullying situation is resolved, the relevant teacher will complete a report, to include the findings of the investigation, the

strategy adopted and the outcome of the intervention, as well as any other relevant information.

- If a pupil has signed such a promise, but then chooses to break that promise, then this can no longer be considered a “mistake”. In this event parents/guardians will be contacted and informed of the nature and extent of the bullying behaviour with a view to agreeing a strategy whereby a promised to end the bullying behaviour would be honoured.
- Parents may be invited to a meeting with the relevant teacher/principal.
- The principal/relevant teacher may look to outside agencies such as NEPS for further advice on how to work with the perpetrator of the bullying behaviour.
- If the bullying behaviour does not cease, a pupil may be suspended from school.
- Where the bullying behaviour has not ceased after 20 days a formal report form is logged and will be reported to the Board of Management.
- In extreme situations, the case may be referred to the Board of Management and the pupil may be expelled from the school.(see School’s Code of Behaviour Policy for guidelines on expulsion)
- All documentation regarding bullying incidents and their resolution is retained securely by the school.

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

- Bullied Pupils
 - Ending the bullying behaviours
 - Changing the school culture to foster more respect for bullied pupils and all other pupils
 - Changing the school culture to foster greater empathy towards and support for bullied pupils.
 - Indicating that the bullying behaviour is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the awareness raising programme
 - After resolution, enabling bullied pupils to complete a victim-impact statement
 - Making adequate counselling facilities available to pupils who need it in a timely manner.
 - Helping bullied pupils raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular or team activities during or after school)
 - Implementing a “buddy system” in school.
- Bullied Pupils
 - Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform will not be punished and are given a clean sheet.
 - Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are doing the right and honourable thing and giving them praise for this.
 - Making adequate counselling facilities available to help those who need it learn other ways of meeting their needs besides violating the rights of others.

- Helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills (e.g participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school)
- Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils’ feelings of self-worth
- In dealing with negative behaviour in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child.

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 _____

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel and is readily accessible to parents and pupils on request. 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 and will be readily accessible to parents and pupils on request. 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: _____

Signed: _____ (Principal)

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____

Appendix 2 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 absent.

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 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.

- o Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas, changing rooms, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision.

- o 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.

work of student councils.

Support the establishment of student councils.