

## **Anti-Bullying Policy Tarmon N.S.**

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 Tarmon N.S. 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 of Tarmon N.S. 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(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows:

The class Teacher (s) initially

The principal thereafter, if necessary

The B.O.M. and staff of Tarmon N.S. believe that the above staged approach to dealing with bullying works best.

**5. The education and prevention strategies that will be used in Tarmon N.S. to combat bullying (including cyber bullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying) are as follows: -**

**5.1 School awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour**

The BOM and staff of Tarmon N.S. believe that awareness of bullying is essential to the elimination of bullying. There is a strong sense of community and co-operation between Board of Management, staff, pupils and parents, and each has a clear role in the prevention of bullying. By employing the following strategies the school will emphasise that bullying is unacceptable: -

- o Entire school community (pupils, parents, staff and BOM) have a shared understanding of what bullying behaviour is
- o Through a programme of positive action, the school promotes an atmosphere of friendship, respect and tolerance.
- o The school will hold a 'Friendship Week' at regular intervals during the school year to highlight the importance of friendship.
- o The SPHE curriculum, including the Walk Tall and Stay Safe programmes, is used throughout the school to support the anti-bullying policy. Circle time and role play will be employed.
- o Teachers will use both the formal and informal curriculum to emphasise that bullying is unacceptable... visual arts activities, posters, drama, role play, SPHE, cooperative games...
- o Sporting activities may be used as an opportunity for channelling and learning how to control aggression and other emotions
- o Positive self-esteem is fostered among the pupils by celebrating individual differences/achievements, by acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour and by providing opportunities for success.
- o Pupils are helped to develop empathy by discussing feelings and by trying to put themselves in the place of others.
- o Teachers respond sensitively to pupils who disclose incidents of bullying.
- o The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed regularly with the pupils in class
- o The staff are particularly vigilant in monitoring pupils who are considered at risk of bullying/ being bullied.
- o All members of staff have a duty to report incidents of bullying.
- o All disclosed incidents of bullying are investigated.
- o Members of the BOM are familiar with the school's policy on bullying and actively promote it on a repeated basis among staff, parents and pupils.

Parents contribute to and support the school's policy on bullying by encouraging positive behaviour both at home and at school, by being vigilant for signs and symptoms that their child is being bullied or is bullying others and by communicating concerns to the school.

## **5.2 Adequate supervision practices as a strategy for prevention of bullying behaviour**

- o All sections of the playground are supervised at break times.
- o Children must ask permission to return to the school building to use the bathroom.
- o A maximum of three children are allowed back into the school at break time to go to the toilet (at any one time). This is carefully monitored by the supervising adult.
- o On wet days children remain in their classrooms, seated. Classroom doors will remain open and the teacher on duty will circulate between the classrooms.

## **5.3 Strategies for the prevention of cyber bullying**

### 5.3.1 What is cyber-bullying?

Cyber bullying is the use of ICT (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.

### 5.3.2 Types of 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 ‘Blue jacking’ (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.

This list is not exhaustive/ definitive and may be added to at any time as the need arises or as technology develops.

### 5.3.3 Procedures to prevent Cyber Bullying

The BOM and staff of Tarmon N.S believe that the best way of dealing with Cyber bullying is to prevent it happening in the first place. While pupils are not allowed bring mobile phones to school (see school policy on Mobile Phones), pupils are always supervised while using internet in school and social media sites are blocked and cannot be accessed in school pupils may still experience cyber bullying.

In Tarmon N.S: -

- Pupils are taught appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while on line and to report any concerns about cyber bullying.
- Staff, pupils, parents and BOM are made aware of issues surrounding cyber bullying
- Pupils will be urged to report and discuss all incidents of cyber bullying with their parents.
- Staff CPD (Continuous Professional Development) will assist in learning about current technologies
- Pupils will learn about cyber bullying through Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), assemblies, friendship week activities and other curriculum projects

- Parents will be provided with information and advice on how to combat cyber bullying
- Pupils, parents and staff will be involved in reviewing and revising this policy and school procedure
- All reports of cyber bullying will be investigated and discussed with parents
- The school will engage a speaker (Gardaí) to facilitate a workshop on cyber bullying for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> classes, subject to Gardaí resources and availability.
- The Gardaí will be contacted in cases of actual or suspected illegal content

#### **5.3.4 Information for Pupils**

Each year every mainstream teacher will teach specific S.P.H.E. lessons on the issue of cyber bullying. These lessons will be set at and contain information at an age level appropriate to the class. The Gardaí will be invited to talk to pupils in 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class on the topic of cyber bullying. This will depend on Gardaí resources and availability.

#### **5.3.5 Information for Parents**

Parents will receive information on all lessons conducted in school on the topic of Cyber bullying. Parents will be asked to sign lesson worksheets/ copies. Parents will also be directed to [www.webwise.ie](http://www.webwise.ie) for further information and booklets on the topic of cyber-bullying.

**The following general recommendations are also made to parents: -**

- Keep any/ all P.C's and/ or laptops in a family room, such as a sitting room.
- Supervise children's on-line activity at home.
- Do not allow children access to social media sites such as 'facebook'. These sites already have a age limit.
- Do not purchase a mobile phone, laptop, i-pad etc for a child until they are old enough to use it responsibly

#### **5.4 Homophobic and transphobic bullying**

The use of any type of offensive language is not tolerated in Tarmon N.S. In Tarmon N.S. the management and staff believe in the following quotation: -

***'Equality isn't just the right to be treated the same but the right to be different'.***

The BOM, teachers and staff model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times. Pupils will be 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 in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN will be consistently tackled. Pupils will be given constructive feedback when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent. Reward systems will be in place to promote and reward the desired behaviours.

**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:**

**- 6.1 Procedures for Investigating all Bullying Behaviour**

**In Tarmon N.S. the primary aim for the relevant teacher in investigation and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationship of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame).**

1. In investigating and dealing with allegations of bullying behaviour, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether or not bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
2. All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will 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 will 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.
3. Non-teaching staff such as secretary, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretaker, will be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.
4. **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 relationship of the parties involved as quickly as possible.**
5. It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset.
6. Teachers will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.
7. Initial investigations of bullying will be done quietly and discretely in the classroom. Some incidents might be best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure privacy for all involved. These investigations may be carried out at break times with another person present.
8. All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved, may be interviewed to provide very useful information.
9. 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.
10. If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first (as outlined in 7 above). 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.
11. Each member of the group will be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher.
12. It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident.
13. **In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, 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 the 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 support for their pupils.**
14. Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the

school's anti-bullying policy and efforts will be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.

15. **It will 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.**
16. Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved will 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.
17. 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 1**.
18. 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 relationship between the parties have been restored as is practicable and
  - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal.

19. Where a parent is not satisfied that the school had dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents will be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures. A copy of the school Complaints Procedure is contained in the school Information Booklet which can be accessed on the school website. The steps are as follows, 1. Class teacher, 2. Principal, 3. Chairperson of B.O.M, 4. B.O.M

20. In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school will advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

### **Procedures for recording bullying behaviour**

1. While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will 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.
2. If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher will keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationship of the parties involved.
3. The relevant teacher must use the recording template at **Appendix 1** 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 as applicable.

In each of the circumstances at (a) and (b) above, the recording template at **Appendix 1** will be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal as applicable.

## **7. Programmes of support**

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying involves a whole school approach. This includes school policies (Code of Behaviour, Supervision, Mobile phones etc), S.P.H.E. lessons, Walk Tall programme, Stay Safe Programme, Circle time, Role Play and helping the pupils see others viewpoints. Given the complexity of bullying behaviour, no one intervention/ support programme works in all situations. Therefore various approaches and intervention strategies may be used including suggesting that parents seek referrals so that appropriate outside agencies can assist in order to further support the pupils and their families as needed.

## **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 22.10.2014

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website 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, published on the school website and 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.

This policy was reviewed on the 20.10.2021

Signed: Mary Colleary

Kieran Dowd

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Chairperson B.O.M

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kieran Dowd". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Principal