



# **Scoil Náisiúnta Leacht na mBard**

## **Latnamard National School**

### **Roll No: 16769H**

## **Anti-Bullying Policy**

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 Latnamard NS 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. 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 following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour.

The school has a central role in the children's' social moral development just as it does in their academic development. In school, we work towards standards of behaviour based on the basic principles of honesty, respect, consideration and responsibility. The individuality of each child needs to be accommodated while at the same time acknowledging the right of every child to education in a disruption free environment.

### **Rationale**

This policy is in place in order to ensure that pupils have the right to learn in a supportive caring and safe environment, without the fear of being bullied. Latnamard NS has a clear policy on the promotion of respect for everyone. All staff and pupils are aware that bullying is not acceptable behaviour. This policy promotes this belief and provides clear strategies for teachers, pupils and parents to deal with bullying in a firm, fair, clear, prompt and positive manner

### **Aims of the Policy**

- To foster a school ethos of mutual and self-respect
- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour
- To outline, promote and raise awareness of preventative approaches that can be used in response to reported incidences of bullying

- To develop a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour
- To outline procedures for noting and reporting instances of bullying behaviour
- To outline procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour

### **Prevention Strategies**

- Cyber Bullying: We in Latnamard NS recommend that children in our school should be deterred from social networking and strongly advise parents not to allow pupils to participate in cyber activities that are not age appropriate due in large to the age requirement of the sites (i.e. giving the child a false age to allow them to join online).
- The SPHE curriculum makes specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the inter-related areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships.
- The Stay Safe & RSE programmes provide the children with personal safety skills, which seek to enhance children's self-protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying. Various other social, health and media education programmes can further help to address the problem of bullying behaviour e.g. Friends for Life, Fun Friends, Zippy Friends, KiVa Programme etc.
- The introduction of Monthly Values for school assemblies helps promote positive behaviour among the whole school.
- All subjects – art, drama, music can complement the discussion of bullying
- Sporting activities working as a team and the rewards of working cooperatively
- Physical Education – Healthy lifestyles and living
- Friendship Weeks or Days e.g. compliment slips, WOW wall
- Renew and review our Health Promoting School Programme by contacting the HSE
- National Education Psychological Services - Incredible Years Training offers advice and incentives on positive behaviour
- The staff devote part of their Croke Park staff meetings to Anti-Bullying
- Temporary and substitute teachers upon appointment will be made aware of our anti-bullying procedures and policy.
- Adequate Supervision at all times during the school day
- Information for parents
- Board of Management Reporting

**Definition of Bullying:** Dept. of Education and Science guidelines define bullying as ... *repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against others. Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, which should not be condoned, can scarcely be described as bullying. However, when the behaviour is systematic and ongoing it is bullying and any pupil can be a victim or a perpetrator of bullying. Why do pupils bully? It is generally accepted that bullying is a learned behaviour. Pupils who bully tend to display aggressive attitudes combined with a low level of self-esteem. Children become bullies for many reasons.*

Some of these are:

- They feel insecure and inadequate
- They may be bullied by parents or older children at home
- They may find it difficult to socialise with their peers and so pick on younger more vulnerable children
- They may feel they must succeed at all costs.
- They may be very spoilt and go totally unchallenged at home
- They may be constantly humiliated by others and in turn do this to other children
- They may be physically, sexually or emotionally abused themselves

- Some children become involved in bullying by acting as bystanders or supporters of a bully.

Bullying can take place anywhere:

- In school, in class, in the playground, corridors, toilets
- On the way to or from school
- At activities outside of school
- On the road/street/in the home etc.

NOTE: factors having their origins in differences or conflicts between parties outside the school may contribute to increased incidents of bullying within the school.

Bullying is defined as **repeated** aggression, whether verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against others. Examples of bullying include physical aggression, damage to property, intimidation, isolation, name-calling, taunting or 'slagging'. Child to child bullying, teacher to child, intra staff bullying, parent to staff and parent to child bullying (including a child other than their own) are examples of the areas where bullying may occur.

Isolated instances of aggressive behaviour, which would be dealt with under the Code of Behaviour, would not be described as bullying. However when the behaviour is systematic and ongoing, it is bullying.

The school acknowledges that there are three parties involved in bullying – those who bully, those who are bullied and those who witness the bullying. Staff and teachers bear this in mind when dealing with bullying incidences and try to support and work with all parties involved.

### **Responsibility**

The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows:  
A pupil or parent may bring a bullying concern to any teacher in the school. Individual teachers must take appropriate measures regarding reports of bullying behaviour in accordance with Latnamard NS's anti-bullying policy. The relevant teacher will normally be the class teacher. However, all teachers and support staff are responsible for reporting bullying to the deputy principal and principal.

### **Child to Child Bullying**

On receipt of a report the relevant teacher will take a three-step approach to dealing with the allegation of bullying.

**Step 1:** The relevant teacher speaks to individuals concerned to establish chain of events and whether bullying has occurred. (See Section 6.8.9 of Anti Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools for detailed steps on how to conduct an investigation). In the case of suspected bullying the relevant teacher will keep written records of the case on Aladdin.

**Step 2:** 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 it is practical the relationship of the parties involved. The teacher will establish a plan of action on how to resolve the issues within the next 20 school days. These records are stored on Aladdin under Behaviour Report.

This period of time gives the child who has been engaging in bullying behaviour the opportunity to change her behaviour.

If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, parents/guardians of all parties concerned will be contacted by the relevant teacher to inform them of the incident, findings and the plan of action for the next 20 school days.

When the 20 school day period has elapsed, the relevant teacher will determine whether a bullying base has been adequately and appropriately addressed. In doing so, 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 it practicable.

**Step 3:** In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately resolved by the children 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 stored on Aladdin (Appendix 3 of Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools) and inform the Principal

Should the relevant teacher require the support of the Principal at any point in the procedure, the relevant teacher should discuss the case with the Principal. Where appropriate the Principal can proceed with the case. The relevant teacher shall be included in all further stages of the procedures.

The purpose of these procedures is to resolve the bullying behaviour so that it stops rather than apportioning blame.

### **Bullying by Adults**

In the case of **intra-staff bullying**, Latnamard NS will adopt the procedures outlined in Section C (c2) of the INTO booklet: 'Working Together: Procedures and Policies for Positive Staff Relations'. A copy of this document is available for free download on the INTO website.

In the case of **Teacher – Child bullying**, a complaint should in the first instance be raised with the teacher in question by the parent/guardian of the child if possible and then if necessary referred to the Principal. Where it has not been possible to agree a framework for resolution, the matter should be referred in writing by both parties to the Board of Management for investigation.

In the case of **Parent – Teacher** bullying, the Principal should be informed in the first instance, and if deemed necessary the Board of Management should subsequently be informed in writing.

In the case of **Parent/Visitor to the school – Child** bullying, the complaint should be referred in the first instance to the child's class teacher and subsequently to the Principal if unresolved.

In the case of **Principal – Parent/ Child** bullying, the matter should be raised with the Principal if possible, or referred to the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

### **Recording**

Noting and reporting of bullying behaviour is to be documented using the template for recording bullying behaviour (DES Template Appendix 3). All records must be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation and our Data Protection Policy.

The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour will adhere to the following:

- (i) While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher(s), the relevant teacher(s) will use his/her/their professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding it
- (ii) If it is established by the relevant teacher(s) that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher(s) 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
- (iii) The relevant teacher(s) must use the recording template at Appendix 2 to record the bullying behaviour, which is available on the back of this policy.
- (iv) These reports will be located in the principal's office in the Anti-Bullying folder

### **Supports for Pupils Affected by Bullying**

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying involves a whole school approach. 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 with appropriate outside agencies in order to receive further support for the pupils and their families if needed.

Serious instances of bullying behaviour should, in accordance with the Children First and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, be referred to the HSE Children and Family Services and/or Gardaí as appropriate. The Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools also provide that where school personnel have concerns about a child but are not sure whether to report the matter to the HSE, the Designated Liaison Person must seek advice from the HSE Children and Family Social Services.

A programme of support for pupils who have been bullied will be put in place. This programme may include counselling and/or opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed. The programme will depend and reflect on the severity of the bullying and the needs of the pupil with the support and guidance from parents and outside agencies. The implementation of this programme may also include whole class approaches i.e. Friends for Life, STAY SAFE, Walk Tall etc.

As part of the intervention process, the principal will contact NEPs if advice is needed to produce a programme of support for those pupils involved in bullying behaviour. Pupils involved in bullying behaviour need assistance on an ongoing basis. For those with low self-esteem, opportunities should be developed to increase feelings of self-worth. It is, therefore, important that the learning strategies applied within the school allow for the enhancement of the pupil's self-worth.

Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.

Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour should be encouraged to discuss them with teachers who will seek advice from the HSE and NEPs.

### **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.

### **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 (See Sexual Harassment Policy) 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.

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 and the Department.

Ratified by the Board of Management on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024.

Signed: *Paddy O'Brien*

Date: 31-1-2024

Chairperson of BOM

Signed: *Gina Curley*

Date: 31-1-2024

Principal/Secretary of BOM