



## **Anti- Bullying Policy**

### **Introductory Statement**

This policy was devised and formulated by the whole school community, involving the Board of Management, parents, staff and pupils of Rush National School, in accordance with the Rules and Regulations of the Department of Education and Skills.

### **Rationale**

- In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the Code of Behaviour guidelines issued by TUSLA, the Board of Management of Rush 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.
- 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 therefore is fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour.
- Every child has the right to a caring and secure environment, free from any form of harassment from fellow pupils or significant others.
- All members of Rush National School community shall endeavour to take all appropriate administrative, social and educational measures, to protect the child from all forms of bullying.

### **Relationship to Ethos/Spirit of the School**

Whilst preparing the children to play a pivotal role in their community, it was felt that, in the formulation of our Anti-Bullying Policy, due consideration should be given to the philosophy and ethos of Rush National School. It is a co-educational primary school which aims to provide a well ordered, caring and secure atmosphere, where the intellectual, spiritual, physical, moral and cultural needs of the pupils are identified and addressed. While respect is paid to all religions and/or value systems, Rush National School is a denominational school with a Roman Catholic ethos. The school supports the principles of inclusiveness, equality of access and participation in school life, with respect for diversity of traditions, values and beliefs, language and ways of life in society, whilst working within the context and parameters of the Department of Education and Skills regulations and programmes.

### **Definition of Bullying**

Bullying is defined by the Department of Education and Skills guidelines as repeated physical, verbal or psychological aggression directed by an individual or group against others. Bullying can occur at any age, in any environment, and can be long or short-term.

Cyber-bullying is bullying through the internet or mobile phone, often through social networking sites used by young people.

## **Aims of Policy**

The main aims of an anti-bullying policy are as follows:

- To create a positive school culture and climate that is inclusive and welcoming of difference.
- To create a school climate which is open, supportive and encourages pupils to disclose and discuss bullying behaviour.
- To raise awareness amongst the entire school community (including school management, teachers, pupils, parents, volunteers etc.) that bullying is unacceptable behaviour.
- To ensure comprehensive supervision and monitoring through which all aspects of school activity are kept under observation.
- To provide procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying behaviour.
- To provide procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour.
- To develop a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour.
- To work with and through the various local agencies in countering all forms of bullying and anti-social behaviour.
- To facilitate ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the school's anti-bullying policy.

Isolated or one-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a one-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.

## **Guidelines for Prevention of Bullying Behaviour**

- Foster and development of a positive school culture and climate, based on inclusivity and respect in order to prevent bullying behaviour.
- A school-wide approach to preventing and tackling bullying behaviour.
- Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.
- 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 Special Educational Need (S.E.N.).
- Encourage and reward desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.
- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.
- Actively involve parents and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media.
- Watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- Ensure that there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.

## **Preventative Measures**

All members of Rush National School shall attempt to prevent bullying incidents by;

- Emphasising that bullying is unacceptable.
- Discussing all aspects of bullying with the children, formally through the Social Personal and Health Education programme and informally as the subject arises.
- Promoting the disclosure of bullying incidents by victims and third party witnesses to the appropriate authorities.
- Emphasising that the perpetrator of the bullying incident is equally a victim, requiring appropriate support within the school system.
- Bringing in outside agencies for staff meetings and Parents' Association meetings.

## **Bullying can be Divided into the Following Categories**

- Physical--- hitting, punching, tripping, spitting, kicking, pushing, scratching, damaging property or possessions, stealing, throwing objects at someone, performing humiliating acts on someone, hiding or taking belongings.
- Social/emotional----spreading rumours/nasty stories about someone; making fun of someone; excluding from groups; ignoring, ostracising or alienating.
- Verbal---name-calling; making offensive remarks; insulting someone such as negative comment about a person's appearance, clothing, actions etc.; taunts, teasing or threats.
- Intimidation---playing dirty tricks; defacing or taking possessions; threatening looks or gestures; intimidating or threatening phone calls, social networking sites, e-mails, messages, notes, text messages; extortion; threats of aggression against people, property or possessions.
- Discrimination---ethnic slurs, racism, slurs against children with special needs.
- Criminal---threatening with a weapon, sexual assault, physical assault, stealing property, vandalism.
- Cyber-bullying --- bullying through the internet or mobile phone, often through social networking sites used by young people. (See Anti-Cyber-bullying policy).

## **Signs and Symptoms of a Person being Bullied**

- Fear of going to school.
- Poor or deteriorating schoolwork, inability to concentrate.
- Withdrawn behaviour.
- Depression.
- Loss of confidence.
- Reluctance to go out.
- Shortage of money.

- Torn clothes, broken glasses, missing schoolbooks.
- Repeated signs of bruising and injuries.

## **Reporting, Investigating and Resolving Procedures**

### **Reporting**

- An incident, in most cases is reported by;
  - a) a child/other pupil.
  - b) parents/guardian.
  - c) staff member and should be directed firstly to the class teacher.
- All bullying of pupils should be directed to class teacher.
- If the perpetrator of the bullying incident is an adult, the incident should be reported to the Principal.
- If a complaint is made by a parent, verbally or in writing, the parents of the perpetrator will be notified.

### **Investigating and Resolving**

In any incident of bullying, the teacher should speak with sensitivity and confidentiality:

- To both parties separately, in an attempt to get both sides of the story.
- Interview witnesses/third parties where appropriate; a written account by pupils is often informative.
- Both parties may then be brought together with a view to each hearing the others opinion of the situation.
- An attempt should be made to get the bully to see the situation from the victim's point of view.
- Keep a written report of the discussion and investigation. The Incident Report in Appendix 2 should be completed and returned to the school Principal and stored in the anti-bullying log book/bullying file for each class level.
- Arrange follow-up meetings with the two parties involved, separately, to ensure non-continuance of the bullying.
- If the bullying is not resolved at class level within **20** school days:
  - a) The Principal should be involved.
  - b) The parents of the perpetrator/s and/or the victim(s) shall be requested to attend a meeting in the school with the teacher and Principal. The purpose of this meeting is to seek a solution to the behavioural problem with all involved parties working together.
  - c) 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 or Deputy Principal as applicable.

- d) If the misbehaviour continues, the Board of Management may become involved, with a view to suspension/expulsion. Sanctions imposed will follow the guidelines as laid down in Rush National School's Behaviour Policy.
  - e) If there is a complete denial of involvement by the alleged perpetrator/s, vigorously supported by parents, the Board of Management shall refer the case to the Department of Education and Skills.
- When an incident is being investigated no leading questions or opinions should be asked / offered. The story should be told in the victims own words.
  - An anti-bullying log book will be kept in the Principal's office recording any incidents.
  - The Procedures require that, at least once in every school term, the Principal will provide a report to the Board of Management setting out;
    - (a) the overall number of bullying cases reported by means of the template to the Principal/Deputy Principal since the previous report to the Board of Management
    - and
    - (b) confirmation that all of these cases have been, or are being, dealt with in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy and the Procedures. This must be recorded in the minutes of the Board of Management meeting.
  - The Board of Management must conduct an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementations by the school. The written notification that the review has been completed must be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to Parents' Association.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Role of the Board of Management**

It is the responsibility of the Board of Management of Rush National School to:

- Ensure that staff are familiar with the current Anti-Bullying policy, and follow procedures therein.
- Promote training for teachers and ensure they have a good working knowledge of bullying issues and procedures.
- Have clear written procedures in place to be followed in the event of a bullying disclosure.
- Provide information to parents on the topic of bullying on a regular basis i.e. Information/Discussion Night/Infant enrolment night.
- Undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation by the school.
- A standardised checklist to be used in undertaking the review is included in Appendix 5 of these procedures. It should be noted that in order to complete the checklist, an examination and review of the implementation of the school's Anti-Bullying policy will be required. Appendix 6 is to be signed to confirm the review has taken place.
- The school must put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement identified by the review.

- Written notification that the review has been completed must be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the parents' Association.

### **Role of Principal**

At least once in every school term, the principal must provide a report to the Board of Management setting out:

- The overall number of bullying cases reported (by means of the bullying recording template at Appendix 4) since the previous report to the Board.
- Confirmation that all cases referred to at above have been or are being, dealt with in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy.
- The minutes of the Board of Management meeting must record the above but in doing so must not include any identifying details of the pupils involved.

### **Role of Teachers**

It is the responsibility of teachers to:

- Promote awareness among pupils of all aspects of the schools policy on bullying behaviour formally, through the school's Social Personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E.) programme and informally through incidental discussion as required.
- Be vigilant for signs of bullying and to take appropriate action.
- Respond sensitively to disclosures, bearing in mind that the perpetrator of the incident is equally a victim, requiring appropriate support within the school system.
- Review the Anti-bullying policy bi-annually.
- Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if the circumstances warrant it.

### **Role of Parents**

- Parents should be familiar with all aspects of bullying behaviour, including signs and symptoms of a victim/perpetrator (see Appendix 1 for information on 'Why people bully' and 'Why people are bullied).
- Parents can help by encouraging their child/children to disclose incidents of bullying behaviour.
- Parents should bring to the attention of the school any incident of bullying disclosed to them by their child/children.

### **Role of Pupils**

- Pupils have a responsibility to treat each other with respect.
- Pupils have a responsibility to their fellow pupils to disclose any incident of bullying behaviour to the class teacher, parent or any other member of the school staff.

### **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.

### **Bullying by Adults**

In the case of **intra-staff bullying**, Rush National School 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.

### **Timeframe, Implementation and Review**

#### **Ratification, Communication, Implementation and Review**

A copy of the draft Anti-Bullying policy was made available to all members of staff and to the Board of Management. The suggestions/proposals arising were considered by the Policy Committee in finalizing this policy.

- The draft policy was subsequently reviewed and formally ratified by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_.

Subsequent to Board of Management ratification, the policy was made available on the shared teacher drive on the school IT network to all teaching staff members. Parents were made aware of the existence and availability of the policy by means of School Newsletter and this policy is also included on the Rush National School website at [www.rushnationalschool.ie](http://www.rushnationalschool.ie)

- The plan will be implemented by the teachers and SNAs supported by the Board of Management from \_\_\_\_\_.
- It will be reviewed every \_\_\_\_ years.
- Review Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson of the Board of Management

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

# **Appendices**

**Appendix 1 - Reasons why people are bullied/or bully**

**Appendix 2 - Incident Report to be filled out by class teacher**

**Appendix 3 - Follow up report.**

**Appendix 4 - Template for recording bullying behaviour - Principal/Deputy Principal.**

**Appendix 5 - Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its Implementation.**

**Appendix 6 - Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the anti-bullying policy.**



# Appendix 1

## **Possible reasons why people bully**

- Dislike themselves/ Low self-esteem/ insecurity.
- Don't fit in.
- Peer pressure.
- Feeling upset or angry.
- Feeling superior/ wanting to show off.
- A fear of being bullied themselves.
- Lack of empathy.
- Lack of good role models.
- Have a personality trait that needs fostering in a positive direction.
- Reaction to a traumatic event at home e.g. parental separation, birth of a new baby, death of a loved one.

## **Possible reasons why people are bullied**

The pupils who are most at risk of becoming victims are:

- Those who react in a vulnerable and distressed manner.
- A person who is small, shy or physically weak.
- Someone who does not conform to the 'norm' i.e. physical difference/disability; intellectual disability/ability; race; religion.
- Any pupil, through no fault of their own may be bullied i.e. a person new to the school/isolated; a person lacking in self-confidence; a person who is afraid to disclose.

## Appendix 2

### INCIDENT REPORT

**Name of Pupil:** ..... **Class:** .....

**Date:** ..... **Time:**.....

**Class Teacher:** .....

**Details of Incident:**

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**Action taken to date:**

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**Teachers signature:**

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## Appendix 3

### FOLLOW UP REPORT

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# Appendix 4

## Template for recording bullying behaviour

**1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour**


**3. Source of bullying concern/Report (tick relevant box(es)).**

<input type="checkbox"/> Pupil concerned _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Other Pupil _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Parent _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Teacher _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

**4. Location of incidents (tick Relevant box(es))\***

<input type="checkbox"/> Playground _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Classroom _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Corridor _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Toilets _____
<input type="checkbox"/> School Bus _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

**5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern**

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**6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es))\***

<input type="checkbox"/> Physical Aggression	<input type="checkbox"/> Cyber-bullying
<input type="checkbox"/> Damage to Property	<input type="checkbox"/> Intimidation
<input type="checkbox"/> Isolation/Exclusion	<input type="checkbox"/> Malicious Gossip
<input type="checkbox"/> Name Calling	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (specify)

**7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:**

<input type="checkbox"/> Homophobic	<input type="checkbox"/> Disability/SEN related	<input type="checkbox"/> Racist	<input type="checkbox"/> Membership of Traveller community	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (Specify)

**8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact**

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**9. Details of actions taken**

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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Relevant Teacher) Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# Appendix 5

## Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation.

The Board of management (the Board) must undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation. The following checklist must be used for this purpose. The checklist is an aid to conduction this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. In order to complete the checklist, an examination and review involving both quantitative and qualitative analysis, as appropriate across the various elements of the implementation of the school's anti-bullying policy will be required.

	Yes/No
Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the Requirements of the Anti-bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools?	
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to the school staff (including new staff)?	
Is the Board satisfied that school staff are sufficiently familiar with the policy and procedures to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy and procedures in their day to day work?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	
Had the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	
Have all the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	
Has the Board discussed how well the school is handling all reports of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and not therefore included in the Principal's periodic report to the Board?	
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	
Has the data available from cases reported to the Principal (by the bullying recording template) been analysed to identify any issues, trends or patterns in bullying behaviour?	
Has the board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Chairperson Board of Management

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Principal

# Appendix 6

## Notification regarding the Board of Management’s annual review of the Anti-Bullying Policy.

To: \_\_\_\_\_

The Board of Management of Rush National School wishes to inform you that:

- The Board of Management’s annual review of the school’s Anti-Bullying Policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of ..... (date).
- This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in Appendix 5 of the Department’s Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Chairperson, Board of Management.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Principal



