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Anti-Bullying Policy

Introductory Statement

This policy was devised and formulated by the school community, involving the Board of Management, parents and staff of Rush National School, in accordance with the rules and regulations of the Department of Education and Skills and the Catholic Primary Schools Management Association.

Ethos

Rush National School is a co-educational primary school, which strives to provide a well ordered, caring, happy 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 religious and/or value systems, Rush National School is a Catholic school under the patronage of the Archbishop of Dublin.

Compliance with School Ethos

This policy complements the school ethos of nurturing potential in a caring environment where the welfare of children is paramount.

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.

Aim

The purpose of this policy is to give direction and guidance to school authorities and school personnel in preventing and tackling school-based bullying behaviour amongst its pupils and in dealing with any negative impact within school of bullying behaviour that occurs elsewhere.

Additional aims of the Rush National School 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 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 facilitate ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.

Key Principles of Best Practice

The Board of Management of Rush National School 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.

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Definition of Bullying

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*.

Types of Bullying

The following are some of the types of bullying behaviour that can occur amongst pupils:

- **Physical aggression:** This behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While pupils often engage in 'mess fights', they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.
- **Intimidation:** Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation: it may be based on the use of very aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon. Particularly upsetting can be a facial expression which conveys aggression and/or dislike.
- **Isolation/exclusion and other relational bullying:** This occurs where a certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or all of the class group. This practice is usually initiated by the person engaged in bullying behaviour and can be difficult to detect. It may be accompanied by writing insulting remarks about the pupil in public places, by passing around notes about or drawings of the pupil or by whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard. Relational bullying occurs when a person's attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. One of the most common forms includes control: "Do this or I won't be your friend anymore" (implied or stated); a group ganging up against one person (girl or boy); non-verbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumours about a person or giving them the "silent treatment".
- **Cyber-bullying:** This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, e-mail, instant messaging (IM), apps, gaming sites, chat-rooms and other online technologies. Being the target of inappropriate or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying. As cyber-bullying uses technology to perpetrate bullying behaviour and does not require face to face contact, cyber-bullying can occur at any time (day or night). Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyber-bullying. For example, a target may be sent homophobic text messages or pictures may be posted with negative comments about a person's sexuality, appearance etc.

- **Name calling:** Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) which hurts, insults or humiliates, should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name-calling of this type refers to physical appearance, e.g., size or clothes worn. Accent or distinctive voice characteristics may attract negative attention. Academic ability can also provoke name calling. This tends to operate at two extremes. There are those who are singled out for attention because they are perceived to be weak academically. At the other extreme there are those who, because they are perceived as high achievers, are also targeted.
- **Damage to property:** Personal property can be the focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, school books and other learning material or interference with a pupil's locker or bicycle. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.
- **Extortion:** Demands for money may be made, often accompanied by threats (sometimes carried out in the event of the targeted pupil not delivering on the demand). A pupil may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to another who is engaged in bullying behaviour.

Impacts of Bullying Behaviour

- Pupils who are being bullied may develop feelings of insecurity, humiliation and extreme anxiety and thus may become more vulnerable. Self-confidence may be damaged with a consequent lowering of self-esteem. While they may not talk about what is happening to them, their suffering is indicated through changes in mood and behaviour. Extreme cases of bullying may result in suicide. It is, therefore, essential to be alert to changes in behaviour as early intervention can be very effective.
- Pupils who witness bullying may also be affected and may suffer in similar ways to those who are bullied. For example, pupils who witness identity-based bullying and share that identity can experience anxiety and feel under threat themselves. Pupils can also feel guilt or distress at not being able to help the person being bullied.
- There are also consequences for individuals who engage in bullying behaviour. Pupils who become involved in such behaviour can be at higher risk of depression. Other possible long-term consequences may include an increased risk of developing an anti-social personality, anxiety disorders, a likelihood of substance abuse and law-breaking behaviour in adulthood and decreased educational and occupational attainment.

Indicators of Bullying Behaviour

The following signs and symptoms may suggest that a pupil is being bullied:

- Anxiety about travelling to and from school e.g. requesting parents to drive or collect him/her, changing travel routes, avoiding regular times for travelling to and from school;
- Unwillingness to go to school, refusal to attend, truancy;
- Deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school;
- Pattern of physical illnesses e.g. headaches, stomach aches;
- Unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour which may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or more especially after longer school holidays;
- Visible signs of anxiety or distress e.g. stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, bedwetting;

- Spontaneous out-of-character comments about either pupils or teachers;
- Possessions missing or damaged;
- Increased requests for money or stealing money;
- Unexplained bruising or cuts or damaged clothing; and
- Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling him/her.

There may be other signs depending on the individual and his/her circumstances. The above signs do not necessarily mean that a pupil is being bullied but if repeated or occurring in combination, these signs do warrant investigation in order to establish what is affecting the pupil.

Characteristics Associated with Bullying Behaviour

It is important to recognise that any pupil can be bullied or can engage in bullying behaviour:

- A significant proportion of bullying is not merely behavioural but is rooted in a lack of respect for diversity and in social inequalities. “Prejudice-based” or “identity based” bullying can be a significant factor in bullying behaviour.
- Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour tend to display aggressive attitudes combined with a low level of self-discipline. They may lack any sense of remorse convincing themselves that the other person deserves the treatment they are receiving.
- Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour can be attention seeking: setting out to impress bystanders and responding to the reaction their behaviour provokes. They can lack the ability to empathise. They can appear unaware or indifferent to the other person’s feelings. It is of note that pupils who exhibit bullying behaviour often suffer from a lack of confidence and have low self-esteem.
- However, it must also be recognised that pupils who engage in bullying behaviour do not always intend to bully or may not recognise the potential negative impact of their words and actions on others.
- It is not uncommon to find that pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may also have been bullied themselves.

The pupil who is bullied:

- Any pupil through no fault of their own may be a target of bullying. It is common in the course of normal interaction for pupils to tease or taunt each other. However, at a certain point, teasing and taunting may become forms of bullying behaviour. As pupils can be particularly quick to notice differences in others, pupils who are perceived as different in some way can be more prone to encounter such behaviour. However, the pupils who are most at risk of being bullied are those who react in a vulnerable and a distressed manner. The seriousness and duration of the bullying behaviour can be related to the pupil’s continuing response to the verbal, physical or psychological aggression.
- Pupils who are bullied often experience difficulties in speaking up about bullying. The difficulties include:
 - (i) Fear of reprisals;
 - (ii) Concerns about being perceived as a “tell-tale” for reporting bullying;
 - (iii) Concerns about “getting into trouble” with the principal or teacher for reporting bullying;
 - (iv) Not having evidence to back up a bullying allegation;

- (v) Not knowing how the matter will be dealt with by the school; and
- (vi) Not feeling fully confident of being believed.

More Vulnerable Pupils

- While bullying can happen to any pupil, it is known that some may be more vulnerable to or at risk of experiencing bullying. Such vulnerable groups include pupils with disabilities or special educational needs, those from ethnic minority and migrant groups, pupils from the Traveller Community, lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) pupils and those perceived to be LGBT and pupils of minority religious faiths.
- There can be an increased vulnerability to bullying amongst pupils with special educational needs and particularly those who do not understand social cues and/or have difficulty communicating. Some pupils with complex needs may lack understanding of social situations and therefore trust everyone implicitly. Such pupils may be more vulnerable because they do not have the same social skills or capacity as others to recognise and defend themselves against bullying behaviour. Research suggests that children with disabilities and with special educational needs (SEN) are more likely to be bullied than others. Bullying can also have a more severe impact on such children. For example, some studies which compare the impact of bullying on children with and without certain disabilities, such as a speech and language difficulty, show that bullying has a greater impact on self-esteem for those with a disability.
- Homophobic and transphobic bullying (bullying targeted at those who are or who are perceived to be LGBT) has also been found to be prevalent with evidence that such pupils have particular difficulty in speaking up or reporting the bullying behaviour.

Where Does Bullying Happen?

Bullying can happen anywhere at any time but there are certain times and places which particularly facilitate bullying.

- **Cyber-bullying:** Access to technology means that cyber-bullying can happen around the clock and the pupil's home may not even be a safe haven from such bullying. Pupils are increasingly communicating in ways that are often unknown to adults and free from supervision. The nature of these technologies means digital content can be shared and seen by a very wide audience almost instantly and is almost impossible to delete permanently. While cyber bullying often takes place at home and at night, the impact can also be felt in school.
- **Areas of unstructured activity:** Bullying in schools frequently takes place in the playground/schoolyard. School grounds with hidden or obscured parts may provide an environment conducive to bullying. Many common playground/schoolyard games present opportunities for bullying because of their physical nature. It is relatively easy to single out and bully another pupil. The noise level masks much of what is going on. The playground/schoolyard provides the opportunity for older pupils to pick on younger pupils. It can also be the setting for bullying by groups. Continuing provocation may eventually lead to a physical fight and ironically in some cases the person being bullied may appear to be the aggressor because he/she finally gives vent to his/her frustration. Toilets, corridors, cloakrooms, locker areas, changing rooms, showers, the gym and assembly hall may be the scene of verbal, psychological and physical bullying. The behaviour of pupils in those areas needs careful monitoring.
- **Bullying in the classroom:** Bullying may also take place in class. It may occur subtly through glances, looks and sniggers but may take the more overt form of physical intimidation. It may also be exacerbated if a classroom atmosphere prevails whereby pupils are allowed to make derogatory comments about their classmates or other teachers. However, teachers need to be alert to the

underlying reasons for such comments in case pupils are trying to disclose something which is disturbing them and thus needs further investigation. Bullying may also occur between class periods irrespective of whether the class or the teacher moves.

- Coming to and from school: The area immediately outside the school, the local shops and local neighbourhood are often the scenes of bullying. Bullying can also take place at the bus-stop or on the journey to and from school whether the individuals are walking, cycling or on school buses.

Relevant Teacher for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

- In these procedures, the member of teaching staff who has responsibility for investigating and dealing with bullying is referred to as the “relevant teacher”. At primary level, the relevant teacher will normally be the class teacher.
- The Principal will be notified by the relevant teacher when a case of bullying has been proven.

Implementation of Education and Prevention Strategies including Awareness Raising

- The prevention of bullying is an integral part of Rush National School’s Anti-Bullying Policy.
- Effective practice includes prevention and awareness raising measures across all aspects of bullying and involves strategies to engage pupils in addressing problems when they arise. In particular, such strategies need to build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils.
- As self-esteem is a major factor in determining behaviour, Rush National School will, through curricular and extra-curricular programmes, provide pupils with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth.
- Prevention and awareness raising measures will also deal explicitly with cyberbullying. The best way to address cyber-bullying is to prevent it happening in the first place. Prevention and any awareness raising measures should focus on educating pupils on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while on-line and also on developing a culture of reporting any concerns about cyber-bullying. The school-wide approach and the role of parents is of importance in this regard. The prevention and awareness raising measures should also take into account the scope for cyber-bullying to occur as a result of access to technology from within the school.
- Rush National School’s approach to tackling and preventing bullying will take particular account of the needs of pupils with disabilities or with Special Educational Needs. Approaches to decreasing the likelihood of bullying for pupils with Special Educational Needs include improving inclusion, focusing on developing social skills, paying attention to key moments such as transitioning from primary to post-primary and cultivating a good school culture which has respect for all and helping one another as central.
- Teachers in Rush National School can influence attitudes to bullying behaviour in a positive manner through a range of curricular initiatives. There are several curriculum components which are particularly relevant to the prevention of bullying and the promotion of respect for diversity and inclusiveness. 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 programme at primary level, is a personal safety skills programme which seeks 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.

- There is space within the teaching of all subjects to foster an attitude of respect for all: to promote the value of diversity; to address prejudice and stereotyping and to highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour. In English, there is a wide range of literature available which could be used to stimulate discussion. In Social, Personal, Health Education the interdependence of people in communities at local, national and international levels is stressed. In Geography and History references to colonisation, exploitation and dictatorships could be used to illustrate the negative aspect of power. The work could be extended into many other areas such as Art, Drama, Religious Education, and Physical Education. Co-operation and group enterprise can be promoted through team sports, school clubs and societies as well as through practical subjects. Sporting activities in particular can provide excellent opportunities for channelling and learning how to control aggression.
- The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyberbullying and identity-based bullying including, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by Rush National School are as follows:
 - Development of a positive school culture
 - Promotion of self-esteem through curricular and extracurricular programmes
 - Comprehensive delivery of the Social, Personal, Health Education Curriculum
 - Delivery of the Friends for Life Programme
 - Delivery of the Stay Safe Programme
 - Delivery of the Fun Friends Programme
 - Delivery of the Incredible Years Programme
 - Delivery of the Weaving Wellbeing Programme
 - Delivery of Relationships and Sexuality Programme
 - Coordination of Anti-Cyberbullying Week
 - Coordination of Anti-Bullying Week
 - Coordination of effective Special Educational Needs Programmes
 - Delivery of a Wellbeing segment at each Teacht le Chéile
 - Coordination of a Friendship Week Initiative
 - Promotion and celebration of team activities (Annual Team Awards)
 - Coordination of International Day
 - Coordination of Wellbeing Week
 - Promotion of Student Voice through the Student Council

Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

School authorities must ensure that the school has clear procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying and that these are set out in the school's Anti-Bullying Policy. Rush National School's procedures are consistent with the following:

- (i) 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);
- (ii) 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;
- (iii) 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'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should 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;

- (iv) Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;
- (v) 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;
- (vi) It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset;
- (vii) Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents;
- (viii) Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
- (ix) All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way;
- (x) When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner;
- (xi) If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements;
- (xii) Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face them from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher;
- (xiii) It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s);
- (xiv) In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved should 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 should 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;
- (xv) 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;
- (xvi) It must also 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;
- (xvii) Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should 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;

- (xviii) 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 3.
- (xix) 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; and
 - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal;
- (xx) Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures;
- (xxi) 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.

Procedures for Recording Bullying Behaviour

Consistent Investigation, Follow Up and Recording of Bullying Behaviour:

- A consistent and clear approach to dealing with bullying when it occurs is essential to effective practice. This section provides guidance and direction for Rush National School in relation to the need to use established intervention strategies and ensuring consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour.
- 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 the school's anti-bullying policy.
- In this policy, the member of teaching staff who has responsibility for investigating and dealing with bullying is referred to as the "relevant teacher". At primary level, the relevant teacher will normally be the class teacher.
- The Board of Management of Rush National School has clear procedures for the formal noting and reporting of bullying behaviour and these must be documented in the school's anti-bullying policy. All records must be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation.
- Rush National School's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour adheres to the following:
 - (i) While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must 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.

- (ii) 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 is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- (iii) The relevant teacher must use the recording template at Appendix 3 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 or Deputy Principal as applicable.
- In each of the circumstances at (a) and (b) above, the recording template at Appendix 3 must be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable. It should also be noted that the timeline for recording bullying behaviour in the recording template at Appendix 3 does not in any way preclude the relevant teacher from consulting the Principal or Deputy Principal at an earlier stage in relation to a case.
- When an incident occurs between two or more children that warrants documenting, the relevant teacher will record this using the Incident Report Template on the Aladdin system (Appendix 1).
- Once Bullying behaviour has been established, the relevant teacher will inform the principal. The parent(s)/guardian(s) of the child/children involved in displaying bullying behaviour will be invited to attend a meeting with the relevant teacher. The Parent Teacher Meeting Template (Appendix 2) will be used to record this on the Aladdin system. Parents will sign this document, and this will then be placed on the child/children's file.
- 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 occurred, the relevant teacher will record this using Appendix 3. The parent(s)/guardian(s) of the child/children involved in displaying bullying behaviour will be invited to attend a meeting with the relevant teacher and the principal. The Parent Teacher Meeting Template (Appendix 2) will be used to record this on the Aladdin system. Parents will also sign this document, and this will then be placed on the child/children's file.

Supports for Pupils Affected by Bullying and for Pupils Involved in Bullying Behaviour

- Rush National School has a programme of support for pupils who have been bullied. Such pupils may need 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.
- Resources and relevant evidenced-based programmes of support to assist those affected by bullying will be tailored to the individual. These will be selected from:
 - The Friends for Life Programme
 - The Fun Friends Programme
 - The Incredible Years Programme
 - All Together Now Programme
 - Webwise Resources (HTML Heroes, MySelfie and the Wider World)
 - National Anti-Bullying Research and Resource Centre (Tackle Bullying)

- A programme of support for those pupils involved in bullying behaviour is also part of Rush National School's intervention process. Pupils involved in bullying behaviour need assistance on an ongoing basis. For those with low self-esteem, opportunities will be developed to increase feelings of self-worth. It is, therefore, important that the learning strategies applied within Rush National 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.
- Resources and relevant evidenced-based programmes of support to assist those involved in bullying behaviour will be tailored to the individual. These will be selected from:
 - Aspects of Restorative Practice
 - The Resolving Bullying Book by Peter Nicholson and Fiona McAuslin
 - Components of the Incredible Years Programme
- Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour will be encouraged to discuss them with teachers.

Effective Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils

The Board of Management of Rush National School 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 of Rush National School 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.

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

- 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: _____

Appendix 1: Incident Report

Name of Pupil:	Name of Teacher:	Class:
Date:	Time:	
Details of Incident:		
Action taken to date:		
<hr/>		
<i>Teacher's signature:</i>		

Incident Report Follow Up

Name of Pupil:	Name of Teacher:	Class:
Date:	Time:	
Details of Incident:		
Action taken to date:		
<hr/>		
<i>Teacher's signature:</i>		

Appendix 2: Record of Parent/Teacher Meeting

Pupil: _____ Teacher/Class: _____

Date: _____

In Attendance: _____

Purpose of Meeting: _____

Meeting requested by: _____

Points discussed: _____

Decisions Agreed: _____

Follow Up Other comments: _____

Signed: _____

Appendix 3: 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))*

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

4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))*

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

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

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

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)	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

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9. Details of actions taken

--

Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

Appendix 4: Key Principles of Best Practice to Create a Positive School Culture and Climate

- A cornerstone in the prevention of bullying is a positive school culture and climate that is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity and respect. A school policy on bullying is most effective when supported by a positive school climate which encourages respect, trust, care, consideration and support for others.
- Central to a positive school culture is respectful relationships across the entire school community. This encompasses relationships amongst peers (e.g. pupil to pupil, teacher to teacher) and relationships between groups (e.g. teachers and pupils, parents and teachers etc.).
- The misconception that bullying is a normal phase of development and that it teaches pupils to toughen up needs to be challenged. The school must endeavour to create an environment where pupils feel comfortable and free to discuss and disclose incidents of bullying. This may also require challenging prevailing attitudes so that pupils realise that they also have a responsibility for the safety and welfare of fellow pupils.
- Schools should therefore encourage and strengthen open dialogue between all school staff and pupils. Schools should ensure that they provide appropriate opportunities for pupils to raise their concerns in an environment that is comfortable for the pupil. This dialogue should encompass issues that happen outside school, including cyber-bullying. In order to accomplish this, schools may also need to consider how best to address topics that are masked by prejudice and silence such as homophobic bullying.
- Key elements of a positive school culture and climate are outlined in Table A. Some practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate are also set out in Appendix 4. Other useful resources for schools include the Well-Being Guidelines for Post Primary Schools (published in January 2013) and the National Educational Psychological Service's (NEPS) Continuum of Support documents for primary and post-primary schools.

Table A: Key Elements of a Positive School Culture and Climate

- The school acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment.
- The school acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual and his/her worth as a human being. The school promotes positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among all its members.
- The school prohibits vulgar, offensive, sectarian or other aggressive behaviour or language by any of its members.
- The school has a clear commitment to promoting equity in general and gender equity in particular in all aspects of its functioning.
- The school has the capacity to change in response to pupils' needs.
- The school identifies aspects of curriculum through which positive and lasting influences can be exerted towards forming pupils' attitudes and values.
- The school takes particular care of "at risk" pupils and uses its monitoring systems to facilitate early intervention where necessary and it responds to the needs, fears or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner.
- The school recognises the need to work in partnership with and keep parents informed on procedures to improve relationships on a school-wide basis.
- The school recognises the role of parents in equipping the pupil with a range of lifeskills.
- The school recognises the role of other community agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying.
- The school promotes habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the interdependence of people in groups and communities.
- The school promotes qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among all its members both in school and out of school.
- Staff members share a collegiate responsibility, under the direction of the Principal, to act in preventing bullying/aggressive behaviour by any member of the school community.

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 conducting 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 <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools</i> ?	
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 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?	
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	
Have all of 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 Rush National School’s 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 Rush National 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 the Department of Education and Skills’s Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

Signed _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date _____

Signed _____
Principal

Date _____