



# Anti-Bullying Policy

September 2022

North Dublin Muslim National School

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## **Introduction**

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the Code of Behaviour Guidelines issued by the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB), the Board of Management of the North Dublin Muslim National School have 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.

## **Rationale**

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 are therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

- A positive school culture and climate (See appendix 1) 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;
  - 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 at all times
- Supports for staff
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies) and ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

## **Definitions**

In accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools bullying is defined as follows:

***‘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
- 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 do not fall within the definition of bullying – with the exception of cyber-bullying – and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school’s code of behaviour.

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school’s code of behaviour.

## **Examples of bullying behaviours**

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

<b>General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation (gender, marital status, race, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, member of travelling community)</li><li>• Physical aggression</li><li>• Damage to property</li><li>• Name calling</li><li>• Verbal attacks</li><li>• The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person</li><li>• Offensive graffiti</li><li>• Extortion</li><li>• Intimidation</li><li>• Insulting or offensive gestures</li><li>• The “look”</li><li>• Invasion of personal space</li><li>• A combination of any of the types listed</li></ul>
<b>Cyber</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Denigration:</b> Spreading rumors, lies or gossip to hurt a person’s reputation</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Harassment:</b> Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual</li> <li>• <b>Impersonation:</b> Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name</li> <li>• <b>Flaming:</b> Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight</li> <li>• <b>Trickery:</b> Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online</li> <li>• <b>Outing:</b> Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images</li> <li>• <b>Exclusion:</b> Purposefully excluding someone from an online group</li> <li>• <b>Cyber stalking:</b> Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety</li> <li>• Silent telephone/mobile phone call</li> <li>• Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls</li> <li>• Abusive text messages</li> <li>• Abusive email</li> <li>• Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/TikTok/Google Classroom/ Twitter/YouTube/Instagram/Snapchat or on games consoles</li> <li>• Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures</li> <li>• Abusive posts on any form of communication technology</li> </ul>
<p><b>Identity Based Behaviours</b>  <b>Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation</b> (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).</p>	
<p><b>Homophobic and Transgender</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation</li> <li>• Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation</li> <li>• Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian...used in a derogatory manner</li> <li>• Physical intimidation or attacks</li> <li>• Threats</li> </ul>
<p><b>Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background</li> <li>• Exclusion on the basis of any of the above</li> </ul>
<p><b>Relational</b></p>	<p>This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Malicious gossip/bitching</li> <li>• Isolation &amp; exclusion</li> <li>• Ignoring</li> <li>• Excluding from the group</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taking someone’s friends away</li> <li>• Spreading rumours</li> <li>• Breaking confidence</li> <li>• Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear</li> <li>• The “look”</li> <li>• Use or terminology such as ‘nerd’ in a derogatory way</li> </ul>
<b>Sexual</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching</li> <li>• Harassment</li> </ul>
<b>Special Educational Needs, Disability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name calling</li> <li>• Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs</li> <li>• Taking advantage of some pupils’ vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying</li> <li>• Taking advantage of some pupils’ vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues.</li> <li>• Mimicking a person’s disability</li> <li>• Setting others up for ridicule</li> </ul>

### **Investigation**

The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:

- The class/ support teacher(s) initially
- The Assistant Principal
- The Deputy Principal
- The Principal thereafter if necessary

\*Please note that any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

### **Proactive Measures**

The following education and prevention strategies, at the appropriate and relevant level for each class, will be used by the school:

#### **School-wide approach**

- A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.
- The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Pupils will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions for example the You Can Do It! Programme.
- Whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develops an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it-prevention and intervention.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.
- Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school-to be displayed publicly in classrooms and in common areas of the school.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils.
- The implementation of regular whole school awareness measures e.g. a dedicated notice board in classrooms on the promotion of friendship, annual Friendship Week, termly student surveys regarding bullying in the school.
- Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. 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.
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.:
  - Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
  - Hand note up with homework.
  - Make a phone call to the school or to a trusted teacher in the school.
  - Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.

- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Identify clear protocols to encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied.
- The development of an Acceptable Use Policy in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored, as is the pupils' use of mobile phones.
- Identity based bullying such as homophobic or transphobic bullying will be addressed proactively through the teaching of the Stay Safe programme in its entirety, and the use of PDST resources on an as-needed basis.

#### **Implementation of curricula**

- The implementation of the SPHE curriculum, RSE, Stay Safe, and You Can Do It!
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes, e.g. Stay Safe Programme and the Walk Tall Programme.
- The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.

#### **Links to other policies**

- Code of Behaviour
- Child Protections policy
- Acceptable Use policy



### **Investigating, Resolving and Recording Cases**

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 outlined below.

The primary aim 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).

#### **The school's procedures must be consistent with the following approach:**

It is very important that all involved understand the above approach from the outset.

#### Reporting bullying behaviour

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), and cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;

#### Investigating and dealing with incidents: Style of approach

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the (relevant) teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) 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.
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.
- Where possible incidents should be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after the interview by the teacher. It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s)
- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parent(s)/guardian(s) 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 parent(s)/guardian(s) an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the pupils.

- 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.
- It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parent(s)/guardian(s)) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school.

#### Follow up and recording

- 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;
  - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardian(s) or the school Principal or Deputy Principal
- 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.
- Where a parent(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
- In the event that a parent(s)/guardian(s) has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

#### Recording of bullying behaviour

It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner, with natural justice to the fore.

The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

##### **Informal stage- pre-determination that bullying has occurred**

- All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher.
- While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher must keep a written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.
- The relevant teacher must inform the principal of all incidents being investigated.
- All teachers should keep a record of all incidents in a secure place out of sight of children.

##### **Formal Stage 1-determination that bullying has occurred**

- If, after consultation with the principal and other relevant staff, 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.
- All records should be stored by the relevant teacher and passed on to the next class teacher at the end of the school year. They should be kept out of sight of children, in a secure place.

### **Formal Stage 2: Recording of bullying behaviour.**

- The relevant teacher must use the recording template at **Appendix 2** to record the bullying behaviour 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. On completion of the record, the relevant teacher will retain a copy of the template. They will also provide the Principal with a copy.
- Where the incident is of such a serious level and where the bullying is regarded as potentially abusive, the school as per *Children First National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children* (2011) and the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools*, must consult the HSE Children and Family Social Services with a view to drawing up an appropriate response.

### **Reporting**

- Records of bullying incidents (Appendix 2) should be passed on to the school principal with details of the incidents, the investigations and the outcome.
- These records will be stored in the principal's office.
- A report of same will be provided to the Board which will contain –
  - A record of the number of bullying cases reported (using the recording template)
  - Confirmation that all these cases are being dealt with in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy.

### **Established intervention strategies**

- Teacher interviews with all pupils
- Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process
- Working with parent(s)/guardian(s) to support school interventions
- No Blame Approach (a mediating approach to support settle disputes)
- Circle Time

### **Supporting Affected Pupils**

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is outlined below.

- All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience e.g.
  - Buddy / Peer mentoring system
  - Group work such as circle time
- If pupils require counselling of further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.

### **Supports for Pupils affected by Bullying:**

In order to provide support for those affected by bullying, all members of the school community will endeavour to:

- Raise awareness to all aspects of bullying among the school community so that all relevant

members have a shared understanding of what constitutes bullying behaviours.

- Build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils.
- Provide pupils with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth.
- Provide pupils with strategies to assist them in addressing problems as they arise.
- Educate pupils on appropriate on-line behaviours, how to stay safe on-line and on developing a culture of reporting concerns around cyber-bullying.
- Promote relevant home/school/community links to counter bullying behaviour involving members of the wider school community such as local shopkeepers, traffic wardens, Gardaí, etc.
- Seek, when necessary the assistance/advice of other local persons and formal agencies such as NEPS, HSE social workers, Gardaí, etc.
- Implement the educational programmes, actions listed in the Education and Prevention Strategies section of this policy
- Provide counselling/and or opportunities to develop friendship and social skills.

### **Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils**

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

The following areas have been identified as being “hot spots” and “hot times” for bullying behaviour:

- School yard
- Corridors
- Toilets and toilet block
- Break times
- Lunch times

Staff and pupils are asked to be extra vigilant when pupils are in these areas especially during unstructured instruction time.

### **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.

**Ratification, Implementation and Communication of Policy**

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management in November 2021.

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

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management 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.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal

## **Appendix 1: Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate**

The following are some practical tips for immediate actions that can be taken to help build a positive school culture and climate and to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour.

- Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times
- Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school
- Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages
- Catch them being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention
- Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN
- Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent
- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines
- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media
- Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use
- Follow-up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules
- Actively involve parents and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media
- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school
- Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas
- All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour
- Ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision
- School staff can get pupils to help them to identify bullying 'hot spots' and 'hot times' for bullying in the school
  - Hot spots tend to be in the school yard, toilets, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision
  - Hot times again tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when pupils are in the school yard or moving classrooms.
- Support the establishment and work of student councils

**Appendix 2: 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	
Other pupil(s)	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

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

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
Other	

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

\_\_\_\_\_

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

Physical aggression		Cyber-bullying	
Damage to property		Intimidation	
Isolation/Exclusion		Malicious gossip	
Name calling			
Other (specify)			

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

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**8. Details of actions taken**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
(Relevant Teacher 1)

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
(Relevant Teacher 1)

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date submitted to Principal: \_\_\_\_\_