

F.C.J. Secondary School, Bunclody



Anti- Bullying Policy

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of FCJ Secondary School, Bunclody has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools which were published in September 2013.

2. The Board of Management 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:

- i. Effective leadership;
- ii. A school-wide approach;
- iii. A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
- iv. Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that build empathy, respect and resilience in students and explicitly address the issues of cyber bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and Trans phobic bullying.
- v. Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
- vi. Supports for staff;
- vii. Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and on-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

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

“Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted, by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time”.

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

Deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying, cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person’s membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and are 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 is dealt with in accordance with the school’s Code of Behaviour.

The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is as follows:
Our *Anti- Bullying Co-Ordinator is Mr. Tomás Earls, Deputy Principal*

Students who experience bullying or who know about bullying incidents can report to the

Form Teacher

Dean of Year

School Counsellor

Meitheal Leader

Supervisor

Subject Teacher

Deputy Principal

Principal

All reports will be forwarded to the Anti-Bullying Coordinator

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and trans phobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:

Dealing with Bullying Behaviour:

A two strand approach is used in dealing with bullying behaviour in our school:

- i. Raising awareness about the nature and unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- ii. Investigating and responding to these incidents.

The basic premise we begin from each year is that every student who attends our school has the right to feel safe and happy. We base our anti-bullying policy on this essential right. We use a simple definition that all our students can understand. “Bullying is behaviour that is hurtful, deliberate and repeated”

Students are encouraged to **Recognise, Reject and Report bullying behaviour**. The school staff, students and parents are made aware of the nature of bullying and the signs that might indicate that a student is being bullied. They are encouraged to be vigilant in watching out for these signs and to report any suspicion of bullying.

The Principal addresses the issue of bullying at the first whole school assembly in September and oversees the anti-bullying pledge being taken by all students and staff. All school bus drivers are made aware of our anti- bullying policy and are asked to be vigilant and to report any concerns to the anti – bullying co-ordinator. All school buses have been asked to display the BULLY FREE ZONE sign. The co-ordinator speaks to all first year parents each September on the issue of bullying, making them aware of the signs to look out for and alerting them to the means of reporting any concerns. All classrooms and each school block display the BULLY FREE ZONE signs. Awareness is also raised through worksheets, videos, surveys and presentations prepared by the Anti-Bullying Team, and delivered by the Form Teachers each term. These address the different forms of bullying including cyber, homophobic and trans phobic, the parties involved i.e.: the victim, the bully, and the bystander, the school’s anti-bullying policy, pledge and charter. Various initiatives such as competitions, visiting drama groups, and an anti-bullying module are conducted through the SPHE programme. Each year in the final term our awareness campaign culminates with our anti- bullying week which focuses on specific aspects of bullying, guest speakers for students and parents, internal competitions in creative writing and art, drama group performance, concluding with our “Be yourself Day” when we celebrate our differences and the right of every individual to be who they are and most of all to be safe and happy.

6. The school’s procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:

The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore in as far as is practicable the relationships of the parties involved rather than to apportion blame.

Procedures for Noting and Reporting Bullying Behaviour:

Reports of bullying behaviour are investigated, noted and dealt with by the Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator and team, with a view to establishing the facts and to bring any such behaviour to an end.

Students who are alleged to have been involved in bullying behaviour are interviewed by the co-ordinator.

An anti-bullying report form (Template / Appendix 3) is used to record the incident.

In the event that they have been involved in bullying behaviour they are asked to sign a binding promise that they will treat all students fairly, equally and respectfully including the targeted student.

The Anti-Bullying Team does not apportion blame but rather treats bullying behaviour as a “mistake” that can and must be remedied. This encourages students to report bullying knowing that they are not getting anyone in trouble.

If the promise is forthcoming and is honoured there will be no penalty and that will be the end of the matter.

If the promise is broken, this can no longer be treated as a mistake

Parents are informed and requested to countersign a second promise.

Breach of the additional promise is regarded as a very serious matter and the student(s) concerned may be suspended or expelled.

7. The school’s Programme of Support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:

The school promotes an awareness programme for all students to highlight the dangers of bullying, the need to eradicate bullying and the right of every student to be safe and happy. This is done through our pastoral care system (Form Teacher). Each class has a form teacher and each year group a Dean who are central to this process. In addition our first years are cared for by our sixth year Meitheal leaders.

Victims of bullying need support which might include personal counselling to help them deal with the effects of bullying. Members of the anti-bullying team can be assigned to victims as a point of communication to ensure the student’s well-being and that the situation has not reoccurred. Students who engage in bullying behaviour also may need personal counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others. This is provided by the counselling team in our school. Vulnerable students who are the subject of repeated bullying are made aware of and instructed in coping strategies by a member of the anti-bullying team.

The school’s Anti-Bullying Programme focuses on the role of the bystander and the importance of assuming responsibility and reporting all incidents of bullying.

8. Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils

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

Supervision is in place from 8.00 am each morning and at break and lunchtime. Supervision is carried out by teachers and supervisors who are assigned to a designated area and are aware of the bullying danger spots. Meitheal students frequent the first year area at break and lunch time. FCJ has its own Internet Policy and student usage is monitored. Students are also educated on safe internet use in all computer classes

9. Prevention of Harassment

The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of pupils or staff or the harassment of pupils or staff on any of the nine grounds specified i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

10. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____ [date].

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Council. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

12. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Council. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: _____

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: _____

Signed: _____

(Principal)

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____