



## **LUCAN EDUCATE TOGETHER**

### **POLICY ON ANTI - BULLYING**

#### **1. Introduction:**

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the Educate Welfare Service, Tusla, the Board of Management of Lucan Educate Together N.S. 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.

#### **2. Key Principles of Bullying:**

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;
- 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);
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

### **3. 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*.

### **4. Responsibilities**

The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows: (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

The class teacher will have responsibility for investigating and dealing with first incidents of potential bullying behaviour. A pupil, staff member, parent/guardian may bring a bullying concern to any teacher in the school. It is the responsibility of the person to whom the report is made to pass on the relevant information to the class teacher of the child/children concerned or to the Principal. Individual teachers must take appropriate measures regarding reports of potential bullying behaviour in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

Serious incidents/on-going incidents will be referred by the class teacher to the Principal/Deputy Principal. The procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying behaviour are set out in section 6 of this policy.

## **5. Prevention**

The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows (see Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

### **Proactive Strategies towards prevention of Bullying:**

Our school ethos promotes an atmosphere of friendship, tolerance, respect and co-operation. It is within this context that the following pro-active strategies are incorporated into our school year.

- Staff are constantly vigilant of children's behaviour. Positive behaviour is modelled, recognised and affirmed throughout the school. Children are explicitly taught what respectful language and respectful behavior looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school. There is regular input at class level and at assemblies on the promotion of positive behaviour. Deliberate efforts are made by the staff to notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour. Children are rewarded regularly at class level for positive efforts and certificates are awarded at assemblies to recognize the special efforts children have made. Children in all classes are rewarded on Friday afternoon with 'Golden time'. Records are kept of children's behaviour. Where a child is having difficulty with his/her behaviour he/she is given the necessary support. In this way, our goal is to follow up and follow through with pupils who struggle to follow the rules.
- Promoting positive friendships through "Friendship week" activities such as establishing buddy systems, examining what friendship means, how friends should treat each other, developing and displaying key messages about the positive aspects of friendship.

- Regular Social, Personal , Health Education lessons incorporating the following programmes; Walk Tall, Bi Follain, Relationships and Sexuality Education, Stay Safe, Learn Together.

Awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour is addressed in the classroom, at school assemblies, through pastoral care programme and other informal occasions when the opportunity arises. Children are taught conflict resolution skills and encouraged to report any incident of bullying behaviour

- A buddy system is in place throughout the school to help foster positive relationships between Junior and Senior classes and also classes at the same class level.
- A pastoral care programme is in place, for children who need additional support.
- Circle Time is a regular part of classroom life where children are given the opportunity to share their feelings, opinions and problem solve with regard to social situations and relationships. These activities allow the children to develop empathy, respect for others and tolerance in a non-threatening setting.
- Our school has a democratically elected student council with representatives from all classes. One of the council's roles is to promote positive participation and good citizenship from the wider student body.
- We ensure adequate supervision in the playground and staff record all incidents of negative behaviour in the yard book. These incidents are followed up on to ensure early intervention in order to prevent a pattern of negative behaviour developing between children.
- Children are encouraged to share their concerns around negative interactions with others and are assured of being listened to.
- We make it a priority to catch children "being good "- we notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- Staff consistently tackles 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.
- All members of staff are expected to give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- All staff are encouraged to be particularly vigilant for signs of bullying behaviour.

## **6. Procedure to Deal with Bullying**

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 (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

### **First Report**

Any person in the school community, a pupil, staff member, and parent/guardian may report an incident of serious negative behaviour towards another individual. The class teacher will usually deal with the complaint initially. In investigating and dealing with negative behaviour, the teacher will exercise his/ her professional judgement to determine whether potential bullying has occurred and how best the situation can be resolved. If in investigating the incident, previous unreported incidents are referred to, the staff member should take note and record this information, but treat this report as the first incident formally noted. Please see Appendix 2, template which will be used for recording incidents of bullying behaviour.

Teachers will take a calm, problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of potential bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents/guardians. In any incident of bullying, the teacher will speak separately to the pupils involved, in an attempt to get all sides of the story. All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard for all the pupils concerned. It may also be helpful to ask those involved to write down an account of the incident. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide useful information in this way. A written record of the incident will be kept in the class teacher's behaviour records. As bullying is defined as behaviour that is 'systematic and ongoing' a first incident of aggressive behaviour is not viewed as bullying. It becomes bullying when there are subsequent incidents. Negative behaviour will be dealt with in accordance with the school's code of behaviour (including informing parents).

If the teacher concludes that this negative type of behaviour could lead to bullying, the child/children involved will be made aware of this and the consequences of similar behaviours reoccurring (as outlined in the following sections).

### **Second Incident**

This would usually be referred to the Principal/Deputy Principal. A similar approach to that identified above will be used to investigate the incident. An incident report will be written and filed in class folder. A letter will be written to the parents of the children involved, informing them of the incident and requesting a meeting with parents. Records will be kept of parent/teacher conferences and strategies to address the behaviours.

### **Third and Subsequent Incidents**

The Principal or Deputy Principal will deal with further incidents. Incident reports will be written and filed. Parents of victim and child involved in bullying behaviour will be informed. Records of action plans and parent conferences will be kept. If and when it

is deemed necessary, outside agencies may become involved.

At every stage of the process, parents and pupils are expected and 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. Any lack of co-operation will be referred to the Board of Management.

**Outreach classes** [with specific reference to children in our school community with Autistic Spectrum Disorders]

It is important and appropriate to recognize that many of the interactions of our children in the outreach classes, while reminiscent of bullying – type behaviours are in fact responses typically produced by their autism.

The children struggle specifically in the areas of social communications and social interactions, while attempting to understand how to make social contact with others or to cope with social situations, their behaviour can actually be interpreted as highly anti-social.

In regard to the procedures for noting and reporting an incident of possible bullying involving one of the children in the outreach classes, teachers and staff in the unit will be consulted first. They will, in close consultation with the school management proceed to deal with the situation appropriately.

## **7. Support Structures**

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*) :

A programme of support will be put in place for children who have been bullied. This will be facilitated by a member of the learning support team. During these lessons children will explore themes such as social skills, communication, body language, respect and tolerance, friendship, feelings and decision making.

A programme of support for those pupils involved in bullying behaviour will also be part of the school's intervention process. Similar themes to those listed above will be explored. The primary aim therefore, is to enhance the self-worth of pupils involved. Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling or the school may need to engage external professional support to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.

Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour are encouraged to tell staff and are assured that there will no negative consequences for reporting such incidents.

As previously stated all incidents reported, no matter how trivial, will be investigated and outcomes recorded.

## **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.

## **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. Adoption of Policy**

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 7/12/2016.

## **11. Communication**

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website, provided to the Parent & Teacher's Association and to the Patron. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education & Skills if requested.

## **12. Reviewing the Policy**

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year (considering but not limited to consideration of the items as per checklist at Appendix 3). Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website, provided to the Parent & Teachers' Association and to the Patron. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the Department of Education & Skills.

<b>Activity:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
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<b>Reviewed:</b>	
<b>Ratified by Board of Management:</b>	
<b>Effective from:</b>	
<b>Next Review Date: *</b>	

**\* Unless reviewed at an earlier date if deemed necessary by a change in law, Department policy, or to reflect changing school circumstances.**

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

**Chairperson:**

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

**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 Parent Teachers' 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 are 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 playground/school yard/outdoor areas, changing rooms, 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 playground/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	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

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

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other	

**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)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**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 \_\_\_\_\_

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal \_\_\_\_\_

### **Appendix 3: 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 Parent Teachers' 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 is 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 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 \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal

Date \_\_\_\_\_