



RCS

Anti- Bullying Policy

2021

Ramsgrange Community School is a welcoming, open and inclusive school. Our aim is to develop each of our students as a whole person by promoting an atmosphere of respect, honesty, and fairness in which all in the school community can achieve their full potential.

Ramsgrange
Community
School

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 Ramsgrange Community 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. Bullying will not be tolerated in Ramsgrange Community School. All staff, students and parents will know what the school policy on bullying is and what they should do if bullying arises. There is a whole school/community approach to bullying behaviour in our school. The school community includes Parents, Students, Staff and Board of Management.

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;
 - 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.

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

Definition of bullying Bullying is defined as (CC 0045/2013) ‘unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time’. In addition, in the context of Circular 0045/2013 ‘placing a once off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour’. Every student has a right to an education free from fear and intimidation. The purpose of this policy is to protect that right. 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.
- A students’ behaviour is intimidating and/or of a bullying nature when:
 - “ someone deliberately excludes or isolates another student by writing insulting remarks about them anywhere on the students personal or school property or any communal student area e.g. toilets, notice boards. This is also done through texts, nasty web postings, emails, and instant messages.
 - “ someone says/writes unpleasant comments to/about another person e.g. name calling, being sarcastic, spreading rumours, teasing, making sexually abusive comments or gestures
 - “ someone may push, hit, kick and/or threaten another student, trip another student, make any physical contact or use any form of violence, severe or in any other way, against another student
 - “ someone takes or damages another student’s property, demand or extort another student’s money; or coerce another student into doing the same.
 - “ someone uses very aggressive body language toward another student. This could take the form of a particular tone of voice or a facial expression, which conveys aggression and/or dislike towards another student
 - “ someone openly/anonymously engages in abusive or inappropriate behaviour through any social media including telephone messages, internet websites, text messages, MMS messages etc. in order to bully/intimidate another person.
 - “ someone uses persistent name-calling or you ‘slag’ another student by making very personal remarks about them, which are hurtful, insulting or humiliating e.g. another student’s physical appearance, accent, distinctive voice character, academic ability, sexual orientation, race, religion, where they live, social background or nationality.
 - “ someone attempts to intimidate or abuse any school personnel. This includes teachers, substitutes, Special Needs assistants, cleaning staff, office staff and visitors.
 - “ someone prevents another person from participating fully in any school activity

- b)Teacher Behaviour A teacher may engage in, instigate or unwittingly reinforce bullying behaviour in a number of ways as recognised by the Department of Education and Skills.
- “ Using sarcasm or other insulting or demeaning form of language when addressing students
- “ Making negative comments about a student’s appearance or background
- “ Humiliating or intimidating a student directly or indirectly
- “ Using any form of inappropriate physical contact

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. 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*):

OUR STAFF MEMBERS SHARE A COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY, UNDER THE DIRECTION OF THE PRINCIPAL, TO ACT IN PREVENTING BULLYING/AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR BY ANY MEMBER OF THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

In terms of investigating Bullying behaviour –

1. Year head/Chaplain
2. Deputy Principal
3. Principal

5. 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*):

The following preventative strategies are now in place in our school:

- The whole school, including pupils, parents / guardians and teachers are involved in the ongoing formation of the school's Anti-Bullying Ethos.
 - After admission to the school students sign an anti-bullying agreement in their journal and are informed about the School's Anti-Bullying Programme.
 - The open and easy access to the Chaplain and Guidance Counsellor play a significant role in preventing bullying in the school
 - The Anti Bullying Workshop (first given by Dr. Stephen Minton) is given to all years by the Tutors during Tutor time.
 - Parents will be invited to an Anti-Bullying information evening that will be organised bi-annually and this will happen before Christmas each year.
 - The school's Anti-Bullying Policy will be circulated to new staff members in Ramsgrange Community School and training in procedures given periodically.
 - Our Anti-Bullying Policy is given in the Student Journal and is repeated by the class tutor at the beginning of every year.
 - All Parents are informed of our policy and procedures during the Induction and Transition Programme into 1st year and at Parent information evenings.
 - Discussion in SPHE and R.E. Classes (Anti-Bullying Programme – STOP is delivered).
 - It is addressed as part of the Pastoral Care system in the school (e.g. Guidance Counsellor, Chaplain, Class Teachers, Tutors, Year Heads, Home School Community Liaison Officer).
- All Staff are trained in Restorative Practice and 8 members of staff are trained Restorative Facilitators.

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

Procedures for Noting and Reporting an incident of Bullying Behaviour

In accordance with Circular 0045/2013 the following procedures reflect that the primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and restore as far as is practicable the

relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame.)

- All reports of bullying will be noted, investigated and dealt with by our teachers. In that way it is hoped that students will gain confidence in 'telling'.

• When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, teachers will refer cases to the School Chaplain or

Guidance Counsellor and the Year Head.

• The Chaplain and/or Guidance Counsellor will meet both parties individually to discuss the matter

and to seek possible solutions. An attempt will be made to get the perpetrator to see the situation from

the target's point of view.

• A written record of the incident will be placed in the files of all students involved. This will be done

by the Year Head or whoever dealt with it. (If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed

individually and then will be met as a group.)

• If the perpetrator is involved in a further incident it will be referred to the Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal for further consideration.

• If it is concluded that he/she has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him/her

how he/she is in breach of the Code of Behaviour and Discipline. His/her parents or guardians will be

informed, and a meeting arranged.

• The parents of the target will be informed in the first instance and kept informed during the process.

This will be done by the person investigating the incident i.e. Chaplain, Guidance Counsellor, Yearhead, Deputy Principal or Principal. A record of this will be kept on VShare with the code ABP□T-date.

• Follow up meetings by the School Chaplain/Guidance Counsellor will be arranged with the two parties involved separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the target

is ready and agreeable. This can have a therapeutic effect.

• Where possible the necessary Counselling provision will be made within our school for both parties.

Referrals will be made when appropriate.

• In certain cases, however, it may be necessary to invite the assistance of other local persons and formal agencies such as general medical practitioners, Gardaí, health boards with their social workers

and community workers.

Our anti-bullying school policy also embraces those members of the wider school community. They are

encouraged to play a positive role in assisting our school to counter bullying behaviour by reporting such

behaviour to parents and/or schools as appropriate.

In accordance with Circular 0045/2013 the Principal will provide a report to the Board of Management

setting out:

1. The overall number of bullying cases reported.
2. Confirmation that these cases have been, or are being dealt with in accordance with school policy
3. The Board will do an annual review of the policy and make a written statement that the review has been completed. This will be published on the school website and made readily available on request.

Sanctions

Students are aware that if they are involved in bullying the following will happen:

- They will be warned to stop immediately.
- Ramsgrange Community School is a Restorative Practising School and so RP conversations will be used in order to prevent and mitigate bullying behaviour at every possible opportunity.
- A record will be placed in their file by the Year Head or investigator.
- If a further incident occurs involving the perpetrator the student will be referred to the Year Head and Deputy Principal as a Discipline Matter.
- Their parents will be informed and the student will be sent home until a meeting with the Parents and the Year Head is arranged.
- More serious sanctions ranging from suspension to exclusion will apply to students who engage in continual serious bullying incidences

7. 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*):

- The whole school community is centrally involved in the ongoing formation of the school's anti-bullying ethos
- A large number of staff are involved in the NBSS/ TESS "Check and Connect" programme
- The open and easy access to the Chaplain and guidance counsellor play a significant role in the prevention of bullying
- An anti-bullying workshop is given to all year groups by tutors during a designated tutor time
- Parents are invited to a bi-annual anti-bullying information night
- The anti-bullying programme STOP is delivered during SPHE lessons
- Anti-bullying is addressed as part of the school's care system and there is an online anti-bullying record to track and record cases of bullying
- There is a significant focus on cyber bullying and training is provided for all year groups
- The school delivers a number of different programmes, which include elements of information and training about anti-bullying and overall wellbeing
- There is an established wellbeing committee in the school
- Senior management meet regularly with groups of teachers who have responsibility for

various aspects of school life and organisation

All new staff members are given appropriate information and induction in the school's

Restorative Practice system

The following good practices in relation to preventing and tackling bullying were noted during the incidental inspection:

The school is very active in "Stand Up" week and there is a very active social inclusion group among the students

All staff have been trained in Restorative Practice which has become an integral part of the school's code of behaviour and eight members of staff are trained as Restorative Practice facilitators

First-year students have a lifeskills class which includes a new law module focusing on 'right and wrong' and personal responsibility

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. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 7th September 2021.

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). 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 (or where none exists, be otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). 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)

Signed: _____
(Principal)

Date: _____

Date: _____

Date of next review: September 2022.