

## Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedure, 2024/2025

This policy applies to students in their relationships with each other.

### 1 Context

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 Newpark Comprehensive School has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the School's overall *Relationships and Behaviour Policy*. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools which were published in September 2013 by the Department of Education.

### 2 Board of Management Commitment

The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of students and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour.

In accordance with *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools – Appendix 2 Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate* (September 2013), Newpark fosters a positive school culture and climate which:

- is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity
- is a caring and encourages students to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment
- promotes respectful relationships across the school community
- models effective leadership
- reflects a school-wide approach
- takes into consideration a shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact
- implements education and prevention strategies (including awareness measures) that build empathy, respect and resilience in students; and explicitly addresses the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying
- Provides effective supervision and monitoring of students
- provides supports for staff
- ensures consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies)
- performs on-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy

### 3 Definition

In accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (September 2013)* bullying is defined as:

**‘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, transphobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Travelling Community and bullying of those with 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 will be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the School's *Relationships and Behaviour Policy*.

The School reserves the right to apply its bullying policy in respect of bullying that occurs at a location, activity, function or programme that is not school related if in the opinion of the Principal and/or the Board of Management the alleged bullying has created a hostile environment at school for the victim, has infringed on the rights of the victim at the School and/or has materially or substantially disrupted the education process or the orderly operation of the School.

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, (see the School's *Information Technology Acceptable Use Policy for Students*).

Negative behaviour including harassment (see page 7) that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the School's *Relationships and Behaviour Policy*.

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (September 2013)*, available on the Department of Education website.

#### 4 Types of Bullying

The following types of bullying are examples of behaviour deemed to be inappropriate whether displayed in person (physically/spoken) or written (email, web forum, text messaging etc.):

- Physical aggression: including pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping. 'Mess fights' can be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain and may therefore be considered as bullying behaviour.
- Intimidation: including, but not limited to inappropriate physical contact, aggressive use of body language or the voice being used in an aggressive fashion
- Isolation and exclusion
- Cyber-Bullying
- Name calling
- Damage to property: interfering with personal possessions or locker
- Extortion/Threat - demands for money etc.
- Relational: where a person's attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly undermined e.g., malicious gossip, rumour, innuendo or ridicule of a person
- Verbal abuse
- Inappropriate comments
- Aggressive or obscene language
- Offensive joke

## 5 Education and prevention strategies

The education and prevention strategies that will be used by the school are as follows:

- Full implementation of the SPHE, RSE, and CSPE programmes and curricula to ensure that school culture supports a safe social and personal environment. Training for staff in delivering these programmes
- School-wide training on bullying
- All junior cycle year groups are timetabled for SPHE. This syllabus includes many issues related to bullying behaviour.
- Senior Cycle Life-Skills delivery of lessons on Homophobic Bullying, Gender Identity, Assertive Communication, Mental Health
- Diversity, Interculturalism and positive behaviour promoted by Transition Year guest speakers, as part of the Transition Year Programme
- LGBTQ+ posters displayed on notice boards and on office walls, Pride Club and Pride flag flying outside the main school building alongside the national flag and the green schools' flag.
- Encouragement of the Student Council to become involved in contributing to a safe school environment
- Interventions by staff where needed (Bullying including Homophobic Bullying, Internet Safety, Acceptable Behaviour)
- Pastoral Care system (form teachers, year heads, guidance counsellors, chaplain, nurses, staff-student mentor, where required).
- Student Support Team weekly meetings
- 'Chat with the Chaplain' for all 1<sup>st</sup> year students
- Training, supported by the school, for SPHE teachers on resolving bullying; internet safety and cyber bullying; sexual orientation and homophobia
- Teachers trained in Restorative Practices; restorative practice included in new staff induction
- The implementation of whole school awareness measures, for example: Pride Week, Wellbeing Week, year group assemblies by principal, deputy principals, year heads.
- Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying Policy for the school - on the school website, in student journals, on GPA noticeboard, on GPA welcome screen and all 1<sup>st</sup> Years are made aware of the policy in SPHE class.
- Anti-Bullying Policy is promoted at various occasions: Parent evening for incoming 1<sup>st</sup> years and information evenings for junior cycle parents
- Blocking of social networking sites on the school network
- Supervised lunch time activities
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities. Black Spots identified and supervised regularly. Non-teaching and ancillary staff are encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school alongside the *Information Technology Acceptable Use Policy for Students*.
- Buddy system – 6<sup>th</sup> Year prefects help to support 1<sup>st</sup> year students in their transition to post-primary school and help to encourage a culture of peer support
- Ensuring that students know who to talk to and how to convey their concerns, e.g.,
  - direct approach to a 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
  - parents, friends or bystanders to talk to the school on your behalf
- Administer a confidential questionnaire once a year.
- Will continue to work with outside agencies facilitating the piloting of relevant resource material.

## 6 The school's programme of support for working with students affected by bullying

The school's programme of support for working with students affected by bullying is as follows:

- Pastoral care system
- Student Support team (Chaplain, guidance counsellors, nurses, deputy principals, AEN team member)
- Individual counselling with a guidance counsellor for students where appropriate
- Interventions/workshops with groups where appropriate
- SPHE classes address concerns or issues that need attention
- Restorative meetings
- Working with outside agencies where necessary

## 7 Reporting Incidents of Bullying

Students and parents/guardians can report any bullying incidents to any teacher or Special Needs Assistant. The Special Needs Assistant reports it to a relevant teacher. All reports must be investigated by the teacher who may consult with a relevant teacher. Relevant teachers can be asked to deal with incidents of bullying behaviour.

The **relevant teachers** in the school are:

- Form teachers
- Year leaders
- Members of student support team (chaplain, guidance counsellors, nurses, deputy principals and AEN representative)
- Deputy Principals
- Principal

## 8 Recording of Bullying Behaviour; see procedure

## 9 Data Retention

- Incident record forms are to be filed in the school office.
- Serious incidents are recorded at Board of Management Meetings.
- The forms will be collated and analysed with a view to monitoring levels of bullying behaviour and trends in behaviour. This analysis will be available to the Board of Management.
- Records will be kept for seven years after all parties have left school.
- Where serious incidents have occurred, records will be kept indefinitely.

## 10 Supervision and Monitoring of Students

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.

## 11 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 students or staff or the harassment of students 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.

Incidents of harassment will be dealt with in accordance with the School's *Relationships and Behaviour Policy*.

## 12 Appeals

Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents may refer to the school's complaints procedures. In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedure and is still not satisfied, the parents may make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

## 13 Adoption

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

## 14 Availability

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parent/Teacher Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

## 15 Review

This policy and its implementation are reviewed annually by the Board of Management. Written notification that the review has been completed is made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parent Teacher Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the Patron and/or to the Department of Education.

This policy was reviewed in May 2024 and will be reviewed again in term three 2024/2025, in line with changing information, guidelines, legislation and/or feedback from school stakeholders.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management, Newpark Comprehensive School at its meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> May 2024.

## Procedure

### Stage Zero

Stage zero is implemented when:

- A teacher observes or is informed of once off negative "student – student interaction", i.e., name calling, pushing, writing notes.
- The observed behaviour usually will not require an M.D.
- The observed behaviour is not deemed to be bullying.

Actions:

1. The observed behaviour, or information is reported to the form teacher via email. The subject line of the email should read "Student-Student Interaction". The form teacher will log this behaviour in the "Stage Zero Bullying Record" spreadsheet in their year group Team. This facilitates monitoring patterns of negative behaviour. It will help identify if a particular student is on the receiving end of negative behaviour from a number of different students.
2. A restorative approach is the preferred intervention for this negative behaviour. (see Appendix 1).
3. If follow up is deemed necessary, it should be noted by editing the behaviour event on VShare.

### Stage One

Stage one is implemented when:

- Two incidents of negative behaviour which meet the definition of bullying are recorded for the same student on VShare. (See page 2 of policy for definition)

The form teacher, acting as the relevant teacher will:

1. Meet with the student and discuss the incidents. The student is informed that their behaviour is being dealt with in accordance with the anti-bullying policy.
2. Consider talking to or meeting with parents / guardians.
3. Apply an intervention. Interventions may include:
  - Restorative approach (See Appendix 1)
  - Verbal agreement
  - Verbal warning
  - Detention
  - Parents/guardians informed
  - Serious incidents will be referred directly to the year leader or deputy principal,
4. Note the action(s) taken on a Bullying Record Slip, which is then passed to the form teacher to be stored on the student's file in the front office and on the anti-bullying record file in the front office. The Student Support Team will review the Anti-Bullying Record File once per term to identify issues, trends or patterns and then update the Secretary of the Board of Management accordingly, in order that appropriate oversight arrangements may be followed, as per section 4, Circular Letter 0045/2013.
5. The form teacher acting as the relevant teacher must follow up after two, but no later than three weeks, to ensure that the incident is resolved. This follow up is also recorded on the Bullying Record Slip.

If the incident has not been resolved, it progresses to Stage 2.

## Stage Two

Stage two is implemented when:

- A subsequent report/disclosure is made about the same student i.e., the bullying behaviour is continuing, or a previous incident has not been resolved within three weeks.
  - A serious incident has been reported
1. An incident record form (Appendix III) must be completed and given to the form teacher who files it in the school office.  
At this point the form teacher must consult with the year leader and the year leader must pass the information to the deputy principal and link in with the student support team.
  2. Interventions at this stage are undertaken by the year leader or member(s) of the student support team acting as the relevant teacher.
    - A restorative approach is the preferred intervention. (See Appendix I)
    - Parents will be informed.
    - Interventions may also include:
      - Detention or other appropriate consequence
      - Meeting with parents
      - Written agreement
      - Referral to guidance counsellor
  3. The relevant teacher will follow up progress with individuals involved within ten school days. If the incident has not been resolved, it is progressed to stage three.

## Stage Three

Stage three is implemented when:

- Bullying behaviour continues following stage two interventions
  - An incident is deemed serious by the Principal or Deputy Principal(s).
1. Matter is referred to Principal/Deputy Principal(s).  
  
Formal records of meetings and interventions are written, filed and stored by the Secretary of the Board of Management.  
Consultation with student support or year leader.
  2. Interventions:
    - Meeting(s) with students involved
    - Parents will be contacted
    - Meeting with parents

Interventions may also include:

    - Detention/suspension or other appropriate consequence
    - External referral
    - Contact with other support agencies e.g., NEPS
    - Board of Management will be informed
  3. Monitor situation
  4. If the issue is not resolved school management may implement exclusion procedures.

## Appendix I - Outline of Restorative Practice

A restorative approach will be used if all parties are in agreement.

- A restorative approach deals with inappropriate behaviour by addressing harm done to relationships and people as opposed to the need for assigning blame. It focuses on building and repairing relationships rather than managing and controlling behaviour
- A restorative approach focuses on:
  - What happened?
  - Who has been affected and how?
  - How can we put right the harm that has been done?
  - What have we all learnt to allow us to make different choices the next time?
- The emphasis is on “we” because all those affected by what has happened are also involved in finding a solution to move forward
- The processes includes restorative enquiry and language, restorative discussion, mediation and problem-solving circles
- The aim is to make the situation as right as possible after some behaviour or event which has adversely affected people. Everyone affected has the opportunity to talk about what has happened, how they have been affected and how they are feeling
- They also say what they want to do to repair the damage



**Appendix II - Bullying Record Slip**

**Newpark Comprehensive School**

Bullying Record Slip

**Student(s) allegedly being bullied:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Form \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Form \_\_\_\_\_

**Students(s) allegedly engaged in bullying behaviour:**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Form \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Form \_\_\_\_\_

**Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Location** \_\_\_\_\_

**Type of Bullying Behaviour**

Verbal  Physical  Social

**Details of Behaviour:**

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**Intervention(s):**

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**Teacher** \_\_\_\_\_

**Please pass to Form Teacher. Form Teacher to inform Year Leader.**

**Copy to student file and to anti-bullying record file (both in School Office)**

**Appendix III - Incident Record Form**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Name and form group of student(s) allegedly being bullied:**

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Name and form group of students(s) allegedly engaged in bullying behaviour:

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Source of bullying concerns:-----

**Type of alleged bullying behaviour;** tick(s) where relevant:

Physical aggression	Property damage	Isolation/exclusion
Name calling	Cyber-bullying	Intimidation
Gossip/ spreading rumours	Homophobia	Disability/SEN related
Member of travelling community	Racist	Religious
Civil / family status	Sexual / identity based	Other

**Details of incident:**-----

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Attach students own written account:-----

**Impact of alleged bullying behaviour:** -----

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**Details of actions taken / support offered:** -----

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**Inform Year Leader:** -----

**Number of previous incidents:**-----

**Signed**-----

**Date** submitted to Deputy Principal(s)-----

**Parents informed**----- **Further action:**-----

**Copy to student file and to anti-bullying record file (both in School Office)**