

# Anti-Bullying Policy

The following Anti-Bullying Policy was reviewed by the staff of Ray National School. It was presented to the Board of Management in draft form in March 2012 and then to the Parents Association. Their observations and comments were presented along with the draft policy to the Board of Management and the policy was ratified by the Board of Management in March 2012. It will be circulated to all parents. .

The policy was formulated in accordance with the Education Act 1998, Section 15, (1), (2), Section 21, (1), (3), (4), Section 23 (2), (3) and in accordance with Circular 20/90 of the Department of Education and Rule 130 of the rules for National Schools of the Department of Education.

This policy is based on the DES guidelines "Countering Bullying Behaviour". It aims to produce a safe and caring environment in which all children can develop to their full potential.

The school does not tolerate or condone bullying of any form or at any level of the school community. The Board of Management is committed to ensuring that all members of the school community - pupils, staff, and parents are enabled to act effectively to deal

with bullying. This policy guides action and organisation within the school for preventing and responding to bullying

### **Aims of Anti-Bullying Policy**

1. To create school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidences of bullying behaviour.
2. To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management teachers, pupils, parents/guardians
3. To develop procedures for noting and reporting incidents of bullying behaviour.
4. To develop procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying behaviour
5. To develop a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour.
6. To work with and through the various local agencies in countering all forms of bullying and anti-social behaviour
7. To evaluate the effectiveness of school policy on anti-bullying behaviour.

## **Definition of Bullying**

Bullying is repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against others.

*Pupil Behaviour:* Physical aggression, damage to property, extortion, intimidation, abusive telephone calls, isolation, name-calling, slagging, bullying of school personnel.

*Teacher Behaviour:* using sarcasm, making negative comments about pupil's appearance or background, humiliating a pupil.

## **Contents of Policy**

We will work on a preventative strategy:

1. Pro-active approach
2. Raise self-esteem
3. Children get along with each other
4. Give children opportunity/training/skill to help others and receive help
5. Guidelines for general behaviour both in class and yard
6. Encourage honesty
7. Children will be encouraged to "tell"
8. Each class will engage in the Stay Safe programme as part of S.P.H.E.
9. Focus on personal experience of bullying and develop

an empathy for bullies and victims

10. Outline the procedures for reporting incidents
11. Class Teachers will emphasise the importance of reporting repeated incidents to the Class Teacher as well as the teacher on Yard Supervision
12. A rota will be drawn up to ensure that the yard/classroom are supervised at break times (See Yard Supervision Policy)

### **Procedures for noting and reporting an incident of Bullying Behaviour**

1. All reports of bullying, no matter how trivial, will be investigated and dealt with by the class teacher. In that way pupils will gain confidence in "telling". This confidence factor is of vital importance
2. Serious cases of bullying behaviour by pupils will be referred immediately to the Principal
3. Parents or guardians of victims or bullies will be informed by the Principal earlier rather than later of incidents so that they are given the opportunity of discussing the matter. They are then in a position to help and support their children before a crisis occurs
4. Non-teaching staff such as secretaries/cleaners are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, to the teaching staff
5. In the case of a complaint regarding a staff member

this should be raised with the Principal

6. Where cases relating to either a pupil or a teacher remain unsolved at school level, the matter should be referred to the school's Board of Management.
7. If not solved a Board level, it will then be referred to local inspectorate

### **Procedures for investigation and dealing with bullying**

Teachers will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour reported by either pupils, staff or parents/guardians. In any incident of bullying, the teacher will speak separately to the pupils involved, in an attempt to get both sides of the story. All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all the pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide useful information in this way.

1. When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the teacher will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why, in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with the conflict in a non-aggressive manner
2. If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually and then the individuals are met as a group. Each member will be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone is clear about what everyone else has said. Other pupils may also be

- interviewed to get a clearer picture
3. Incidents of once off aggression will be dealt with according to the schools Code of Discipline. If it is concluded that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him/her to see the situation from the victim's point of view
  4. The "No-blame" approach may be used to resolve less serious incidents of bullying

### **The "No-blame" approach:**

#### **Step 1 - Interview the child being bullied**

If you find out that there has been an incident of bullying, first talk to the victim. At this stage find out who was involved and what the victim is now feeling.

Try asking the following questions:

1. Was it verbal, physical, intimidation
2. How hurt is the victim
3. Was it within his/her own peer group
4. Ensure the victim that his/her name will not come out in the investigation
5. Actively listen

#### **Step 2 - Interview others involved**

Arrange to meet with all those involved, this should include some bystanders, those who may have colluded, those who joined in and those who initiated the bullying.

1. Just have maximum of six to eight in the group - keep

- the number controllable
2. Make a point of calling a special meeting
  3. Ensure the severity of the topic is understood by all
  4. Speak only of the hurt caused in general terms with no reference to the victim
  5. Play on the conscience of all - ask questions like: how would you feel? Would you like it done?

### **Step 3 - Explain the problem**

The distress being suffered as a result of the bullying incident is explained. At this stage the details of the incident or the allocation of the blame/initiators is not discussed. Explain the feelings of loneliness, feeling left out, rejected, laughed at. Try asking these questions:

1. Would they like if it happened to them
2. Someone here in this group was bullied by someone within the group, what can we do to sort it out
3. Listen, watch out for reactions, pick up on any without isolating anyone

### **Step 4 - Share responsibility**

Explain what steps/controls may have to be introduced to prevent further incidents and how everyone will loose out as a result.

### **Step 5 - Encourage pupils to identify solutions**

At this stage the group is encouraged to suggest ways which would make the victim feel happier. All positive responses are noted. Use phrases "if it were you" to encourage a response.

Listen to all suggestions and note them.

### **Step 6 - Leave it to them**

Now the problem has been identified, solutions suggested, the problem is now handed over to the group to solve. Arrange to meet them in a week's time. Pass responsibility over to the group and give a time frame within which something must be done.

### **Step 7 - Meet them again**

With each member of the group including the bully, discuss how things are going, who is doing what and have there been other incidents. This allows for continual monitoring and also keeps all involved in the process.

Again enforce the idea of the "team" looking after each other at regular intervals to ensure it is known the bullying or intimidating behaviour will not be tolerated.

### **Step 8 - Meet the parents**

Meet the parents and if necessary employ the schools Code of Discipline.

1. Teachers who are investigating cases of bullying behaviour will keep a written record of their discussion with those involved. It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident
2. In cases where it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, meet with the parents or

- guardians of the two parties involved as appropriate to
- (a) explain actions being taken and the reasons for them, referring them to the school policy
  - (b) discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions taken by the school
3. Separate follow-up meetings, with the two parties involved will be arranged, with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the victim is ready and agreeable. This can have a therapeutic effect.

### **Anti Bullying Code**

(Personal Safety Statement)

1. We provide a place where every member can feel secure
2. We provide a place where it is known that bullying is not acceptable behaviour
3. We provide a place where name calling is not tolerated
4. We provide a place where no one suffers abuse of any nature
5. We provide a place where no one is victimised
6. We provide a place where each member is supported and listened to
7. We provide a place where it is each member's responsibility to ensure that all are treated equal
8. We provide a place where solutions to problems are the concern of all.

Ray National School is a small 3 teacher school. In cases where a teacher is accused of bullying this will be brought to

the attention of the Chairperson of the Board Of Management who will agree to investigate the accusation using the steps above. The Chairperson after investigation may consult with the Board Of Management and agree procedures for dealing with the accusations. This may include, interviewing the staff separately, then together, chairing staff meetings and if necessary imposing necessary sanctions under advice from the board and DES.

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

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