

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 Largy National 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. 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) 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;
- b) Effective leadership;
- c) A school-wide approach;
- d) A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
- e) 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.
- f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
- g) Supports for staff;
- h) Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
- i) 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:

- a) deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
- b) cyber-bullying and
- c) 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 School* and appears in Appendix 1 of this Document

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows:

- The class teacher initially
- The principal teacher if necessary

5. The following education and prevention strategies, at the appropriate and relevant level for each class, will be used within the school

Creation of a culture of "telling".

- Teachers should repeatedly reinforce the message that if anyone is the victim of bullying behaviour, they should not retaliate in any way, but they should tell an adult. Victims should be reassured that if they tell, something will be done about the bullying in a safe manner and all reported incidents will be dealt with.
- Class lessons to be provided to enable pupils "how to tell" (telling protocol)
- Bystanders can be the key to resolving bullying and if anyone witnesses bullying behaviour, they should always tell a teacher. This is not telling tales but a means of protecting victims.

Raising the awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour by -

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- The SPHE curriculum makes specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the inter-related areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships.
- The Stay Safe, RSE, Grow in Love, Webwise, Walk Tall, programmes at primary level include personal safety skills programmes which seek to enhance children's self-protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying.
- Prevention and awareness raising measures focusing on cyber-bullying by educating pupils on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while online
- A meeting for parents to make them aware of the dangers of cyber – bullying.
- Workshops on Internet Safety which include cyber bullying in particular will be organized for pupils and staff at least every two years. These will be facilitated by experts in the field.
- Parents/guardians are provided with a copy of the Anti-Bullying policy which includes an Appendix on signs of bullying to watch out for

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

(i) In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher(s) will exercise his/her/their professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred, what type if it has and how best the situation might be resolved

(ii) All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher(s). In that way, pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying, they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly

(iii) Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus drivers must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher

(iv) Parents and pupils are 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 as quickly as possible

(v) Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents

(vi) Initial investigations of bullying will be done in class where possible but some incidents might be best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved

(vii) If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements

- The 'Relevant Teacher' investigates all instances of reported or suspected bullying behaviour with a view to establishing the facts and bringing any such behaviour to an end.

- The School, through the 'Relevant Teacher' reserves the right to ask any pupil to write an account of what happened, as part of an investigation. This will be a standard procedure and does not necessarily imply that a pupil is guilty of misbehaviour.
- Pupils who are alleged to have been involved in bullying behaviour are interviewed by the 'Relevant Teacher' to establish the nature and extent of the behaviour and any reasons for it. In the event that they have been involved in bullying behaviour they are asked to sign a binding promise that they will treat all pupils fairly, equally and respectfully including the targeted pupil(s).
- The 'Relevant Teacher' does not apportion blame but rather treats bullying behaviour as a "mistake" that can and must be remedied. S/he emphasises that the intention is not to punish perpetrators but to talk to them, to explain how harmful and hurtful bullying is and to seek a promise that it will stop. If that promise is forthcoming and is honoured there will be no penalty and that will be the end of the matter. Pupils who report bullying therefore are not getting others "in trouble" so much as enabling them to get out of trouble into which they may ultimately get if the bullying continued.
- When an investigation is completed and/or a bullying situation is resolved the 'Relevant Teacher' will complete a report, to include the findings of the investigation, the strategy adopted and the outcome of the intervention, as well as any other relevant information.
- If a pupil has signed such a promise but then chooses to break that promise and continue the bullying behaviour, this can then no longer be considered a "mistake." In this event parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed and requested to countersign their daughter/son's promise. Breach of this additional promise by further bullying behaviour is regarded as a very grave matter and a serious sanction may be imposed by the school authorities (See sanctions below).
- All documentation regarding bullying incidents and their resolution is retained securely in the school.
- Sanctions:
Where a pupil has been found to be engaged in bullying behaviour, has formally promised to stop and has broken that promise, any of the following sanctions may be imposed:
 - S/he may be required to sign another promise, this time countersigned by a parent/guardian;
 - Parent(s)/guardian(s) may be contacted by the 'Relevant Teacher' and informed of the nature and extent of the bullying behaviour with a view to agreeing a strategy whereby a promise to end the bullying behaviour would be honoured;
 - Parent(s)/guardian(s) may be invited to a meeting with the 'Relevant Teacher' and the Principal and the pupil may be suspended from school.
 - The case may be referred to the Board of Management and the pupil may be expelled from the school.

Recording

Noting and reporting of bullying behaviour is to be documented using the template at Appendix 3

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows

Victims

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- Victims are reassured from the outset that they are not to blame. Strategies for restoring self-esteem are explored between teacher and parents/guardians.
 - Helping bullied pupils raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school).
- Where deemed necessary, the child in consultation with parents may be referred for counselling.
- The parents of the pupils concerned will be advised to contact the local Gardai if appropriate.

Bullies

- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are not blamed or punished and get a “clean sheet,”
 - Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are doing the right and honourable thing and giving them praise for this,
 - Helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school),
 - Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils’ feelings of self-worth,
- Where deemed necessary, the child in consultation with parents may be referred for counselling. They may need to learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others. Empathy awareness needs to be developed.
 - Clinical referral and assessment may be necessary.

Incidents of bullying can extend beyond the school and the journey to and from school is one which can provide particular opportunities for bullying to occur. The school's policy could be given to those who are closely involved at this stage (e.g. bus driver) so that if bullying behaviour is witnessed by them, that they may report it to the school.

- In certain cases too it may be necessary to invite assistance from formal agencies such as Gardai, (J.L.O) Health Board, Local Youth Groups etc.
 - In relation to bullying in schools, Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2017 and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools provide that ‘in cases of serious incidents of bullying where the behaviour is regarded as possibly abusive the school may need to make a referral to Tusla and/or An Garda Siochana.’
 - The school will constantly remind parents of the dangers of "cyber- bullying" as can happen with the use of social networking sites and mobile phones. We also direct their attention to the school's internet Acceptable Use Policy (AUP).

The school cannot be responsible for disagreements between pupils that happen outside the school grounds but will make reasonable efforts to cooperate with parents in assisting them to resolve the

issues.

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 5 June 2014.
11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website 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 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.

Review

This policy will be reviewed in annually

Reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management on 25 May 2021

Signed: P.J.Leddy
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: M Hoey
Principal

Date: 25/05/21

Date: 25/05/21

Appendix 1

Bullying can take a number of forms. These may include any of the following (this list is not exhaustive):

- **Repeated aggressive behaviour/attitude/body language, for example:**

Shouting and uncontrolled anger,

Personal insults,

Verbal abuse,

Offensive language directed at an individual,

Continually shouting or dismissing others,

Public verbal attacks/criticism,

Domineering behaviour,

Open aggression,

Offensive gestures and unwanted physical contact.

- **Intimidation, either physical, psychological or emotional, for example:**

Treating in a dictatorial manner,

Ridicule,

Persistent slagging,

Deliberate staring with the intent to discomfort.

Persistent rudeness in behaviour and attitude toward a particular individual.

Asking inappropriate questions/making inappropriate comments re. personal life/family

Asking inappropriate questions/making inappropriate comments re. social life or schoolwork.

- **Interference with property, for example:**

Stealing/damaging books or equipment

Stealing/damaging clothing or other property

Demanding money with menaces

Persistently moving, hiding or interfering with property

Marking/defacing property

- **Undermining/Public or Private Humiliation, for example:**

Condescending tone,

Deliberately withholding significant information and resources,

Writing of anonymous notes,

Malicious, disparaging or demeaning comments,

Malicious tricks/derogatory jokes,

Knowingly spreading rumours,

Belittling others' efforts, their enthusiasm or their new ideas,

Derogatory or offensive nicknames (name-calling),

Using electronic or other media for any of the above (cyber bullying),

Disrespectfully mimicking a particular individual in his/her absence,

- **Ostracising or isolating, for example:**

Deliberately marginalising an individual

Deliberately preventing a person from joining a group,

Deliberately preventing from joining in an activity, schoolwork-related or recreational

Blaming a pupil for things s/he did not do.

Effects of Bullying

Bullying can affect pupils in many different ways. When pupils are bullied their lives may be made miserable. They may suffer injury. They may be unhappy about coming to school. They may lose self-confidence and self esteem, blaming themselves for the bullying. Some children may experience stressful symptoms such as stomach aches and headaches, nightmares or panic attacks. (This form of unhappiness is likely to affect their concentration and learning). If unchallenged other pupils can learn that bullying is a quick and effective way of getting what they want.

Indications of Bullying Behaviour – Signs and Symptoms

The following signs/symptoms may suggest that a pupil is being bullied:

- Anxiety about travelling to and from school - requesting parents to drive or collect them, changing route of travel, avoiding regular times for travelling to and from school.
- Unwillingness to go to school, refusal to attend, mitching.
- Deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school.
- Pattern of physical illnesses (e.g. headaches, stomach aches).
- Unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour. It may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or more especially after longer school holidays.
- Visible signs of anxiety or distress - stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, bedwetting.
- Spontaneous out-of-character comments about either pupils or teachers.
- Possessions missing or damaged.
- Increased requests for money or stealing money.
- Unexplained bruising or cuts or damaged clothing.
- Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling her/him.

Those signs do not necessarily mean that a pupil is being bullied. If repeated or occurring in combination, these signs warrant investigation in order to establish what is affecting the child.

What to do if your child is being bullied

- Discuss the experience with your child to find out the precise details of what has happened.
- Reassure her/him that you and the school will help her/him.
- Discuss with her/him what to do next - he may be able to suggest strategies for dealing with it.
- Encourage her/him to tell his teacher.
- Contact the school as soon as possible.
- Follow-up to ensure that the matter is dealt with and resolved.

What to tell your child to do if someone they know is being bullied

- Tell a teacher (privately if necessary)
- Tell his/her parents - they will contact the school.
- Talk to the person who is being bullied - you may be able to help her/him.
- Reject bullying behaviour among your friends - tell them that it is wrong to bully.
- Help the bullied person to get away from the situation.
- Know and follow the school code of discipline.

What to tell your child to do if you are being bullied

- Tell the teacher immediately.
- Tell your parents when you get home.
- Help the teacher to investigate it.
- Tell a friend about what is happening.
- Tell the bully to stop

Appendix 3 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))*	4. Location of Incident (tick relevant box(es))*
Pupil concerned	Playground
Other Pupil	Classroom
Parent	Corridor
Teacher	Toilet
Other	School Bus
	Other

5.

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Name of person(s) who reported the

bullying concern

6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) *

Physical Aggression	Cyber-bullying	
Damage to Property	Intimidation	
Isolation/Exclusion	Malicious Gossip	
Name Calling	Other (specify)	

7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)

8.

of and

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Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

9.

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**Details of
actions taken**

Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

*** Note:** The categories listed in the tables 3, 4 & 6 are suggested and schools may add to or amend these to suit their own circumstances.