



Anti-Bullying Policy of ETSS Wicklow

School Address: The Glebe, Wicklow Town

Roll number: 68345R

School Patron/s: Educate Together

Introduction:

ETSSW Anti-Bullying Policy is created within the frame of reference of the Code of Behaviour. We regard bullying as a serious infringement of individual rights and a serious threat to the self-esteem and self-confidence of students affected. Therefore, we do not tolerate bullying of any kind. Every report of bullying will be treated seriously and investigated thoroughly, having due regard for the well-being of the students involved. Members of staff at ETSSW accept a collective responsibility to work to prevent bullying, aggression and/or harassment by any member of the school community. The school recognises the role of the entire school community in identifying and reporting bullying behaviour and acknowledges its own role in taking appropriate action when bullying behaviour becomes apparent.

The immediate priorities should incidents of bullying occur are:

- (1) to end the bullying
- (2) to resolve the issues
- (3) to restore the relationships involved insofar as is practicable

Student participation in school life is encouraged through all existing school structures. An important aspect of this positive school culture is to be aware of how to recognise bullying and to report it immediately.

Scope:

This policy will apply to the following:

- School time (including break times);
- Going to and from school (all methods of transport);
- School tours/ trips;
- Extra-curricular activities;
- Online behaviour which impacts on school life;

Anti-bullying policy document:

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by TUSLA¹, the Board of Management of ETSSW 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 published in September 2013.²
2. 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:
 - A positive school culture and climate welcoming difference and diversity and based on inclusivity;
 - Encouragement of students to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment;
 - Promotion of respectful relationships across the school community;
 - Effective leadership;
 - A school-wide approach to anti-bullying;
 - 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 students; and explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
 - Effective supervision and monitoring of students;
 - Supports for staff e.g. training and policy reviews;
 - 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.

¹ <http://www.tusla.ie/services/educational-welfare-services/information-for-schools-inc-absencereporting/guidelines-on-codes-of-behaviour/developing-a-code-of-behaviour-guidelines-for-schools>

² <https://www.education.ie/en/Publications/Policy-Reports/Anti-Bullying-Procedures-for-Primary-and-PostPrimary-Schools.pdf>

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:

- Deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying
- Cyber-bullying
- 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 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 (*isolated incidents of intentional negative behaviour such as once-off offensive or hurtful text messages or other private messaging do not fall within the definition of bullying and will be dealt with under the school's code of behaviour*);
- **Types of bullying included in the definition:**
 - i physical aggression including pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people;
 - ii severe physical assault;
 - iii 'mess fights' used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain;
 - iv intimidation through aggressive body language;
 - v using the voice as a weapon;
 - vi facial expressions conveying aggression and/or dislike;
 - vii isolating/excluding students and other relational bullying;
 - viii publishing insulting remarks about a student;
 - ix passing around of notes or drawings of the student;
 - x whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard;
 - xi ganging up against one person;
 - xii non-verbal gesturing;
 - xiii malicious gossip;
 - xiv spreading rumours about a person or giving them the 'silent treatment';
 - xv cyber-bullying;
 - xvi persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) which hurts, insults or humiliates;
 - xvii damage to personal property such as clothing, mobile phone or other devices, school books or other learning materials;
 - xviii interference with a student's locker or bicycle

(this is a non-exhaustive list which includes all other behaviours which upon investigation are deemed to meet the definition of bullying).

4. The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are:

Subject teachers; class tutors; deputy principal and 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:
- a. Staff members share responsibility to act in preventing bullying/aggressive behaviour by any member of the school;
 - b. The school promotes qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among all its members both in school and out of school;
 - c. The school acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual and his/her worth as a human being;
 - d. The school promotes habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the interdependence of people in groups and in the community;
 - e. The school recognises the role of the other community agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying;
 - f. The school recognises the right of the parents/guardians to share in the task of equipping the student with a range of life-skills;
 - g. The school recognises the need to co-operate with and keep parents/guardians informed about procedures to improve relationships within the school community;
 - h. The school takes particular care of *'at risk'* students and uses its monitoring system to provide early intervention when/if necessary and responds to the needs, fears or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner;
 - i. The school identifies aspects of curriculum through which positive and lasting influences can be exerted towards forming students' attitudes and values;
 - j. The school has the capacity to change in response to the students' needs;
 - k. The school has a clear commitment to promoting equity in general and gender equity in particular in all aspects of its functioning;
 - l. The school disapproves of vulgar, offensive, sectarian or other aggressive behaviour by any of its members;
 - m. The school promotes positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among all its members;
6. The school acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment and recognises that all bullying not only has negative impacts in the present, but are also experiences which young people tend to carry with them for a long time.
7. 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:

Low level bullying incidents

- Have a serious talk with ringleader/s
- Inform the Class Tutor
- Issue a verbal warning
- In appropriate cases, agree a fair outcome: e.g. an apology, a detention ...
- Remind those involved that all incidents go on their records
- Ask students for a written reflection on the incident

More serious bullying incidents

- Inform any student accused of a bullying incident that allegations have been made
- Speak to all parties separately in unbiased hearings
- Ask those involved to write reports
- Principal/Deputy Principal informed
- Parents/guardians of the students involved informed
- Consider all available options for fair and proportionate outcomes and impose appropriate sanctions
- Seek verbal agreements regarding future behaviour
- Consider asking students to sign written agreements regarding future behaviour
- Consider referring students to appropriate agencies for further help

Persistent Bullying

- Inform any student accused of bullying incidents that allegations have been made
- Speak to all parties separately in unbiased hearings
- Ask those involved to write reports
- Parents/guardians of the students involved informed
- Principal/Deputy Principal to meet with parents/guardians
- The Board of Management will be informed
- Consider all available options for fair and proportionate outcomes and impose appropriate sanctions up to and including the future of the student in the school
- Seek verbal agreements regarding future behaviour
- Parents/Guardians will be asked to sign a written agreement regarding future behaviour
- Counselling will be offered
- The student may be referred to child psychologist/ Garda Juvenile Liaison Officer
- Contact may be made with other support agencies

Accusation Involving Staff Members

- In cases where a member of staff is alleged to have bullied a student, the Principal will investigate the matter and take appropriate action
- In cases where a student is alleged to have bullied a teacher, the Principal will investigate the matter and take appropriate action
- If the alleged incident involves the Principal or Deputy Principal, the chairperson of the Board of Management will investigate the matter and take appropriate action.

Follow-up Procedures:

- Relevant teachers (i.e. tutors, class teachers, etc.) will be made aware of the situation and asked to monitor the students involved.
- A member of the staff will meet with both victim and bully, individually at first and then together, if appropriate, at a later time.
- The students involved will continue to be monitored by the class tutors and relevant teachers. Further meetings will be scheduled as necessary.

Noting and recording:

- All incidents of bullying will be recorded and the records maintained on file in the Principal's office.
 - The aim of this record is to aid memory by recording details of the incident and to add clarity in the assessment of the situation.
 - A template for the report form is included in Appendix II.
8. A clear principle towards the overall effectiveness of this policy is to make it clear to all students that when they report incidents of bullying, they are not telling tales, but are behaving responsibly. They must also know who they can tell and how they can tell.

Who to tell?

- Any staff member
- Class Tutor
- Another student
- Parent/Guardian

How to tell?

- Make a direct approach to a staff member at any time
 - Hand up a note with homework
 - Get a parent/guardian or friend to tell on their behalf
 - Make a phone call to the school
 - Use opportunities such as periodic surveys on bullying during welfare classes
9. A victim's silence is the greatest asset to a person engaged in bullying behaviour. Any student who feels they are a victim of bullying should report the matter to any member of the school staff, teaching or non-teaching, or their parents/guardians. It is really important to report bullying behaviour and allow the staff to help resolve it. At ETSS Wicklow, our strong message is: **DO NOT SUFFER IN SILENCE!**
10. Once appropriate penalties have been applied, both sides may be in need of healing, rehabilitation and reconciliation. Victims may be in need of counselling and also of opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise self-esteem. Students who engage in bullying behaviour may also need counselling to help them better understand their impact on other people and to realise the enormous harm caused by bullying behaviour.
11. 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 under Equality legislation i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.
12. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management **Tuesday 09 November 2021**
13. This policy has been made available to school personnel and is readily accessible to parents /guardians and students on request and provided to the Parent-Staff Association (PSA). A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

14. 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 and be readily accessible to parents/guardians and students on request and provided to the PSA. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.