



## The Teresian School Anti-Bullying Policy 2014-2015

### We do not tolerate bullying in The Teresian 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 The Teresian 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. This policy has been created following an extensive consultation process with teaching staff, the Student Council and the students of the School, the Parents' Council and the parents of the School.
2. In keeping with our stated aim of providing a person-centred education, based on faith and Christian values, which aims to develop each student to the full, 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:

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.

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 teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:
  - **All staff in The Teresian School are aware of the issues surrounding bullying and are in a position to report any concerns if necessary.** A student may approach any teacher she feels she can talk to. The **Pastoral Care Officer** and the **Careers Guidance Counsellor** have their own offices and can be approached directly.
  - A student may always approach her **Class Teacher**. The Class Teacher will either deal with minor concerns in accordance with our Code of Behaviour or pass them onto the **Year Coordinator**.
  - The **Year Coordinator** will deal with more serious issues. Working with other teachers, the Year Coordinator may be able to resolve the issues and invoke certain sanctions. The Year Coordinator will brief and liaise with the **Deputy Principal** on all issues on a weekly basis. Parents may be contacted.
  - The **Deputy Principal**, working with the **Year Coordinator**, will investigate serious cases. The Deputy Principal may implement certain sanctions or recommend more serious sanctions to the **Principal**.
  - The **Principal** will be involved in the final stages of serious cases. He may meet with the parents of the students involved. If necessary, the Principal will invoke the most serious sanctions, in accordance with our Code of Behaviour. **The Board of Management** may be involved.
5. Teresian Students are educated to be strong, actively thinking, caring and happy people who will make a contribution to the world we live in. A strategy document for the purpose of promotion of good relationships and the education and prevention of bullying will be maintained and reviewed. 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. A working summary of The Teresian School policy will be prominently displayed:
    - In Student Journals
    - On the corridors of the School
    - On our Website



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- In all classrooms
- b. Planned ethos events:
  - Consistent messages through weekly assemblies.
  - Special assemblies, presented by students
  - Class Teacher Time
  - A positive relationship week
  - Retreats
  - “Accord”
- c. Explicit curricular planning in subjects such as:
  - Religious Education
  - CSPE
  - SPHE
- d. Opportunities for mixing and interacting with students of all ages:
  - The Teresian Teams: Áthas, Misneach and Grá.
  - Ethos events such as the Christmas Campaigns, Solidarity Week and Jump for Joy
  - The Student Council
  - Faith Friends
  - Cairde Teiréisigh
- e. Scheduled talks and activities:
  - Guest speakers
  - Specialized programmes
- f. Training for all Staff, based on an audit of need, delivered internally and externally.

Throughout all of these areas we will seek to draw attention to our Mission Statement, particularly the idea of appreciating the dignity and uniqueness of each person in a family-like atmosphere where staff, students and all school personnel are respected and valued. Following from this we will explore and emphasise:

- The need to work with others to make our School a better place.
  - The power our behaviour has to make other people’s lives better.
  - The importance of respecting individuals no matter how we feel toward them
  - The reasons for negative behaviour and how it can be prevented and/or stopped.
  - The unacceptability of negative behaviour toward others.
  - The lasting damage that negative behaviour can do to others, whether intended or not.
  - The need for reconciliation and restoration.
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 set out below. Our primary aim is to resolve issues and restore as far as is practicable the relationships of the students involved.

Our education and prevention strategies will encourage students to come forward if they have a concern about themselves or another student.



A parent will contact the Class Teacher in the case of an initial concern, although they may be referred to the Year Coordinator for more serious issues. Concerns about bullying must be fully disclosed if an effective and timely investigation is to take place and should include:

- Details of incidents outside School, including through social media, which may have an impact upon School life.
- Details of incidents inside School which the School may be unaware of.
- Details such as names, places, dates, times and actions.

Although the School cannot guarantee confidentiality we will aim to handle situations with discretion and sensitivity.

The Teresian School will aim for a localized resolution of issues where possible.

- I. Minor incidents may be dealt with by the **Class Teacher**. In these cases limited sanctions may be required. Students will be encouraged to come up with their own solutions. The Class Teacher will inform the **Year Coordinator**, who will document any concern relating to bullying.
- II. More complex issues may be dealt with by the **Year Coordinator**. The **Year Coordinator** may conduct an investigation into a reported incident of bullying which may include some or all of the following steps:
  - a. The student who has been reported as being affected by negative behaviour will be spoken to.
  - b. If the concern is serious enough, the student may be asked to write down an account of what has happened. If the investigation is to proceed further, she will be asked for names.
  - c. Witnesses may also be spoken to and asked for written accounts.
  - d. Any students who have been identified by another student as being involved in negative behaviour will be spoken to and may be asked for a written account.

The parents of the parties involved should be contacted by the **Year Coordinator** at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken by reference to the school policy.

The Year Coordinator will liaise with and brief the **Deputy Principal** regarding this investigation, which will be conducted in a fair manner and be evidence based. The resulting documentation will be filed as a report by the Deputy Principal.

- III. The **Deputy Principal** will make a decision as to the seriousness of these events. Where possible, the Year Coordinator may be able to issue any appropriate sanctions and to stop the unwanted behaviours. However, the Deputy Principal may feel that the situation warrants further investigation and action which will be recorded and filed by the Deputy Principal.
- IV. The **Deputy Principal** may involve the **Pastoral Care Team** (the **Year Coordinator**, **Pastoral Care Officer** and **Careers Guidance Counsellor**) in a **Student Support Plan** for a student who is involved with negative behaviours and/or a student who is vulnerable and/or affected by negative behaviours. The student and her parents will be involved in putting together the **Student Support Plan**. A member of staff will act as a **link person** through a written Student Support Plan for a student who feels or is identified as vulnerable.
- V. The **Deputy Principal** might request the involvement of the **Principal**. This will be in the most serious cases.
  - a. **The Principal** may seek a meeting with the parents of all parties.
  - b. Where deemed necessary, the most serious sanctions will be invoked, in accordance with our Code of Behaviour.



Where a reported concern has been identified as a bullying incident by the School, this will be recorded on the **Incident Report for Bullying Behaviour** (in the format prescribed by the Department of Education policy document) and filed. This report must be completed within 20 days of the Deputy Principal establishing that a bullying incident has taken place.

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

The School will work together with parents and students to bring situations to the best possible resolution. In any investigation where there is a concern about the vulnerability of a student the **Pastoral Care Team** (the **Year Coordinator, Pastoral Care Officer** and **Careers Guidance Counsellor**) will be involved. The approach of the Pastoral Care Team will be coordinated by the **Deputy Principal** and this may involve a written **Student Support Plan**. The following factors will be considered:

- Every case is different and students may have different needs. The individual needs of the student will be a key consideration and will be identified by the Pastoral Care Team.
- The student may need intensive support for a time and this will be provided by designated members of staff.
- The student may need a link person as part of Student Support Plan, a member of staff they are comfortable approaching in an informal way, to express any further concerns over time.
- If a group has been affected by the behaviour, then planned, structured group and individual sessions may be required with designated teachers.
- Those students identified as being involved in negative behaviours need to address and come to terms with their actions as well as restoring relationships. All sanctions will require this from students. The Deputy Principal may coordinate the Pastoral Care Team and create a Student Support Plan for this purpose.

These interventions will be recorded and filed by the Deputy Principal, working with other members of staff or external partners as required and negotiated.

Within 4-6 weeks of an initial incident being acted upon through sanctions, the effectiveness of these and the follow-up support process will be evaluated by the **Deputy Principal**.

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 \_\_\_\_\_ [date].

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Council. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.



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12. The procedures include oversight arrangements which require that, at least once in every school term, the Principal will provide a report to the Board of Management setting out:
- the overall number of bullying cases reported (by means of the bullying recording template in Appendix 3) to the Principal or Deputy Principal since the previous report to the Board and
  - confirmation that all of these cases have been, or are being, dealt with in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy and these procedures.

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' Council. 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: \_\_\_\_\_