



# *The Teresian School*

12, Stillorgan Road, Dublin 4 Tel 2691376 Fax 2602878

## The Teresian Junior School

### Anti-Bullying Policy 2014 – 2015

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Management of the Teresian Junior 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 School Mission Statement affirms "we are committed to appreciating the dignity and uniqueness of each person, in a family-like atmosphere where staff, students and all school personnel are respected and valued". Management, adhering firmly to this, 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:

- **each class teacher**
- **the 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:

- The **RE, SPHE and RSE** programmes as well as the new **STAY SAFE** programme.
- All teachers will receive training on how to deal with bullying and will be made fully aware of the anti-bullying policy and the process for dealing with cases of bullying.
- Anti-bullying programmes selected by the Principal, Teachers and Parents' Council
- Discrete bullying lessons – SPHE, Role-play, Circle Time, Assemblies
- Friendship Week - Week of 14<sup>th</sup> February.
- Ethos days and events – learning about the ethos of the school
- Poster Campaign
- Regular talks on bullying by visiting speakers (e.g. Member of the Gardai, Child Psychologist,). Monthly Assembly Theme.
- Promotion of the role of the bystander and the impact children can have on promoting a climate on non-bullying
- Emphasis on school's Golden Rules : We are kind and helpful  
We are polite and considerate  
We are good listeners  
We are honest  
We look after property

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 broken up into two sections as follows:

**Key aims, attitudes and behaviours when investigating a case:**

The school will employ a “Zero” tolerance approach to bullying. The primary aim for the relevant teacher in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved rather than to apportion blame.

1. In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgment to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
2. All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. 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. Such reports of bullying will be recorded in the yard book or on a standard incident form.
3. Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher. A standard procedure and phrase will be used by non-teaching staff.
4. 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.
5. It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset.
6. Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.
7. Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
8. All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way.
9. When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should seek answers to the questions what, where, when, who and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.

**The school’s procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:**

Depending on the severity of the bullying the teacher may ask to have a parent present at any point during this process.

Initial report: A parent /child or third party will express their concern to the **class teacher** .

1. The teacher will interview the child involved and depending on age may ask them to write down what happened.
2. The teacher will then interview the child allegedly engaged in bullying behaviour.
3. If anyone else has witnessed the behavior they will be asked for information.
4. If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter all those involved will be met as a group. At this meeting, each child will be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone is clear about what each one has said. Each member of the group will be

supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after their interview by the teacher.

The teacher may impose appropriate sanctions.

If the teacher sees that it is a severe case of bullying she will refer it to the **Principal** who will work with her towards a possible solution or may have to resort to more severe sanctions in accordance with the Code of Behaviour.

#### **A) Actions**

1. In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken. The school will give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their children.
2. Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts will be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied. If disciplinary sanctions need to be imposed then this will be done quickly and decisively.
3. There will also be measures put in place to help all parties involved in the case and ensure that they are supported through all stages of the process and afterwards.
4. Parents and the children involved will be notified of any decisions and/ or repercussions of the bullying case.
5. It will also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school.

#### **The school's procedures for reporting bullying are as follows**

1. All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with.
2. The class teacher will use her professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.
3. If it is established by the class teacher that bullying has occurred, she will keep appropriate written records which will assist her efforts to resolve the issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationship of the parties involved.
4. The class teacher will use the **Form for Recording Bullying Behaviour:**
  - a) in cases where she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 schooldays after she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred; and
  - b) where she decides that, in the circumstances, the bullying behavior must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal.

### **Follow-Up**

1. Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable. This can have a therapeutic effect but must be done with the consent of the children involved.
2. Within 20 school days after it was determined that bullying behaviour had occurred, the parents and/or children will be contacted to ensure that they are happy with the outcome of the case. In cases where the relevant teacher or parents/child considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed, it must be recorded by the relevant teacher in the **Form for Recording Bullying Behaviour** and further actions must be taken and the case is then officially referred to the Principal.
3. In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgment, take the following factors into account:
  - a. Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
  - b. Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
  - c. Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable; and
  - d. Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal;
4. Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
5. In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.
6. If a child has been repeatedly involved in bullying or the extent of the bullying is severe their parents will be called in to review the situation with the school and to put an individual plan of action in place to try and resolve the issue. If further cases of bullying have been reported and no change in the child's behaviour is visible then the only recourse open to the school may be to invoke more severe sanctions in accordance with the Code of Behaviour.
7. **The school's programme of support for pupils affected by bullying is as follows:**
  - Use of social stories on an individual and whole school basis to promote positive attitudes towards those affected by bullying
  - Opportunities to increase feelings of self-worth
  - Opportunities to participate in activities designed to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience.
  - Providing opportunities for success throughout the curriculum
  - A support plan for vulnerable children
8. Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils

The 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 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 Management on \_\_\_\_\_ [date]
11. This policy was drawn up after consultation with the Junior School Staff and the Junior School Parent's Council.
12. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website, is readily accessible to parents and pupils on request and provided to the Parents' Council. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the Trustees, if requested.
13. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the 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 be otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request and provided to the Parents' Council. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the Trustees and the Department.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Manager)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal)

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

Date of next review: \_\_\_\_\_