Gowran N.S.

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 Gowran NS 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.

Here at Gowran National School we believe that our pupils have the right to learn in a supportive, caring environment. We work towards standards of behaviour based on the principles of honesty, respect, consideration and responsibility. The individuality of each child needs to be accommodated while at the same time acknowledging the right of every child to education in a disruption free environment. 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.

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 positive school culture and climate which-

  o is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;

  o encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and

  o 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-

- o build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
- o 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.

Policy Aims:
(1) To encourage and develop respectful relationships between children and between staff and children.
(2) To create a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
(3) To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, staff, pupils, parents/guardians.
(4) To develop procedures for noting and reporting incidents of bullying behaviour.
(5) To develop procedures for dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.
(6) To develop a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour.
(7) To work with and through various agencies/organisations/individuals in countering all forms of bullying and anti-social behaviour, e.g. community garda, guest speakers, National Educational Psychological Service.
(8) To evaluate the effectiveness of school policy on bullying behaviour.
We aspire to fulfil the above aims by fostering an atmosphere of respect, understanding and encouragement between all who teach, work and learn in the school, so that the development and contribution of every individual can be acknowledged and all can work together to benefit
personal growth and the common good.

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.

Types of Bullying.

General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying	• Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc. • Physical aggression • Damage to property • Name calling • Slagging • The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person • Offensive graffiti • Extortion • Intimidation • Insulting or offensive gestures • The "look" • Invasion of personal space • A combination of any of the types listed.
Cyber	• **Denigration**: Spreading rumors, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation • **Harassment**: Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual • **Impersonation**: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name • **Flaming**: Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight • **Trickery**: Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online • **Outing**: Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images • **Exclusion**: Purposefully excluding someone from an online group • **Cyber stalking**: Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety

	• Silent telephone/mobile phone call • Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls • Abusive text messages • Abusive email • Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/ Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles • Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures • Abusive posts on any form of communication technology

Identity Based Behaviours
Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).

Homophobic and Transgender	• Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation • Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation • Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian...used in a derogatory manner • Physical intimidation or attacks • Threats
Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community	• Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background • Exclusion on the basis of any of the above
Relational	This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include: • Malicious gossip • Isolation & exclusion • Ignoring • Excluding from the group • Taking someone's friends away • "Bitching" • Spreading rumours • Breaking confidence • Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear • The "look" • Use or terminology such as 'nerd' in a derogatory way
Sexual	• Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching • Harassment
Special Educational Needs, Disability	• Name calling • Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs • Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying • Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues. • Mimicking a person's disability • Setting others up for ridicule

Effects of Bullying

Pupils who are being bullied may develop feelings of insecurity and extreme anxiety and thus may become more vulnerable. Self-confidence may be damaged, with a consequent lowering of their self-esteem. While they may not talk about what is happening to them, their suffering is indicated though changes in mood and behaviour. Bullying may occasionally result in suicide. It is, therefore, important to be alert to changes in behaviour as early intervention is desirable.

Characteristics of Bullying Behaviour

Schools need to realise that any pupil can be a victim of, or perpetrator of bullying behaviour.

The Victim/ The Target

Any pupil, through no fault f their own may be bullied. It is common in the course of normal play for pupils to tease or taunt one another. However, at a certain point, teasing and taunting may become bullying behaviour. As pupils are particularly quick to notice differences in others, pupils who are perceived as different are more prone to encounter such behaviour. However, the pupils who are most at risk of becoming victims are those who react in a vulnerable and distressed manner. The seriousness and duration of the bullying behaviour is directly related to the pupil's continuing response to the verbal, physical or psychological aggression.
It is of note that some pupils can unwittingly behave in a very provocative manner which attracts bullying behaviour.

The Bully

It is generally accepted that bullying is a learned behaviour. Pupils who bully tend to display aggressive attitudes, combined with a low level of self-discipline. They can lack any sense of remorse; often they convince themselves that the victim deserves the treatment meted out. Pupils who bully can also be attention-seeking; often they set out to impress bystanders and enjoy the reaction their behaviour provokes. They tend to lack the ability to empathise. They are unaware of or indifferent to the victim's feelings. Others seem to enjoy inflicting pain. It is of note that many bullies suffer from a lack of confidence and have low self-esteem.
It is not uncommon to find that pupils who engage in bullying behaviour are also bullied. They tend to be easily provoked and frequently provoke others.

The Bystander

Passive bullying includes being a bystander and watching a bullying incident and doing nothing to stop it, or encouraging another to bully. Bullying is a difficult problem that only gets worse when it is ignored. Research clearly demonstrates that bystanders play a significant and pivotal role in the management and addressing of bullying.
• Bystanders are present most of the time (around 85%), where adults are rarely present.
• Most young people feel uncomfortable but very few know what to do to stop it happening.
• Bullying behaviour is reinforced where people watch but do nothing.
• When bystanders do intervene, the bullying is more likely to stop quickly most of the time

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In the school's daily and routine life, the ways in which people interact with each other significantly affect each person's sense of self-worth, belonging and well-being.
The fostering of high-quality interpersonal relationships among teachers, students, parents and
ancillary staff is a responsibility shared by everyone.
All members of the school community have a role to play in the prevention of bullying.

Responsibilities of Board of Management

The Board of Management is responsible for ensuring that all members of the school community are enabled to deal effectively with bullying. The Board is committed to providing
time and resources for the implementation of the policy. The Board will ensure that proper supervisory and monitoring measures are in place to prevent bullying and to deal with incidents
appropriately as they arise.

Responsibilities of School Staff

• To acknowledge that staff members share a collegiate responsibility, under the direction of the Principal, to act in preventing bullying/aggressive behaviour by any member of the school community.
• To draw upon Restorative Justice practices, taking into account the age of the students
• To implement prevention and intervention strategies which build and maintain a safe learning
environment for the whole school community
• To empower students to deal with conflict in constructive ways using Restorative Justice practices
• To take all reports of bullying seriously and to report them to the Principal if warranted
• To document any serious bullying incidents using the Bullying Incident Report File and Appendix 3 where necessary.

Responsibilities of Pupils

• To show consideration, respect and support towards others
• To be able to identify bullying behaviour
• To not bully others
• To tell if they are being bullied or if they see someone else being bullied
• To engage in responsible reporting when witnessing or experiencing bullying behaviour
• To feel empathy for targeted members of the school community and, as a result, take safe and
sensible action as a bystander.

Responsibilities of Parents

• To support the school in the implementation of the policy
• To watch out for signs that their child may be being bullied
• To speak to the class teacher if their child is being bullied or they suspect that this is happening
• To instruct their children to tell if they are bullied or if they have seen other students being bullied
• To notify the school if they think that their child is displaying bullying behaviour and to work
with the school in addressing this problem
• To never directly approach a student or the parent of a student at the school to intervene in behavioural issues
To recognise the importance of their role in equipping their child with a range of life skills.

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:
- The class teacher(s) initially
- The Principal thereafter, if necessary.

5. The following education and prevention strategies, at the appropriate and relevant level for each class, (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber- bullying and identity-based bullying) will be used by the school:

- Prevention and awareness raising measures across all aspects of bullying, including strategies to engage pupils in addressing problems when they arise. In particular, such strategies need to build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils
- Provide pupils with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth
- Prevention and awareness raising measures focusing on cyber-bullying, by educating pupils on appropriate online behaviour and how to stay safe while online using the Webwise programme (see Anti-Cyber Bullying policy)

- Teachers can influence attitudes to bullying behaviour in a positive manner through a range of curricular initiatives:
  There are a number of curriculum components and programmes which are particularly relevant to the prevention of bullying and the promotion of respect for diversity and inclusiveness. 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 and Walk Tall programmes are personal safety skills programmes which seek to enhance children's self-protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying. Aspects of the Alive O Religious Education programme are also relevant
- This work can be extended into many other curricular and extra-curricular areas eg Visual Arts, Music Drama, and Physical Education where we can utilise opportunities to promote respect for all, address prejudice and stereotyping and promote the value of diversity, while the use of co-operative and group work across the curriculum can enhance these objectives. Initiatives such as Buddy Reading and Playground Friends can promote a nurturing relationship between younger and older pupils. Sporting activities in particular can provide excellent opportunities for channelling and learning how to control aggression and many of our pupils are coached by staff members in hurling, camogie and gaelic football, along with volleyball, basketball and tennis.

  The following specific anti-bullying initiatives are also in place:

- A copy of the school's Anti-bullying Policy and Code of Behaviour is given
  to the parents of the incoming Junior Infants class at the Open Day in their Welcome Pack
  Parents/guardians are required to sign an undertaking which supports the
  policy.
- The revised Anti-bullying Policy and Code of Behaviour will be available on-line to all
  parents on the school website: www.gowranns.ie
- A hard copy of the school's Anti-bullying Policy and Code of Behaviour will be
  on public display near the main Office. A copy will be available to parents on request from the school Office.
- Each class will devise classroom rules at the beginning of each year
  which will promote inclusion, acceptance of difference and respect for
  one another.
- Bullying Awareness Week – the school will run an annual bullying
  awareness week in October, where various classes and events will be run
  to increase knowledge of what bullying is and what impact it can have.
  Where the opportunity arises, guest speakers with an expertise in the area of bullying prevention will be invited to address pupils, staff and parents
  Competitions will be held on the theme in Art, Poetry, Prose and Drama.
- Anti-bullying posters will be made, discussed and displayed throughout
  the school.
- In February we will have Friendship Week. This will include class
  based/school based fun activities which promote co-operation, sharing,
  friendship between all the children. Circle-time, class discussions on
  friendship (making friends, maintaining friendships, resolving conflict,
  responsibilities towards one another etc) will be held.

- Additional lessons which deal specifically with bullying will be undertaken in each class e.g. Prim Ed Bullying Series, with an emphasis on openness and discussion in this area. (Areas covered will include – What is bullying? Forms of bullying, Cyber bullying, Why do people bully? Bystander bullies, Silent witnesses, Effects of bullying, How does bullying make me feel? What can we do? Preventing bullying, Coping with bullying etc).
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.:
    - Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
    - Hand note up with homework.
    - Make a phone call to the school or to a trusted teacher in the scho
    - Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
    - Administer a confidential questionnaire once a term to all pupils.
    - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Discussion of the underlying principles of the school's Anti-bullying Policy and Code of Behaviour will regularly form part of the agenda of staff meetings

6. The primary aim 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).

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

Ancillary staff are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying they witness to a teacher or the Principal.

Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying.

(i) The Teacher of the class of the child who is alleged to have engaged in bullying behaviour shall investigate the allegation unless the alleged perpetrator and the victim belong to different classes in which case both class teachers will investigate the complaint. In investigating and dealing with the complaint, the teacher(s) will exercise his/her/their professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred or a breach of the Code of Behavior, and act accordingly to see how best the situation might be resolved

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

(iii) 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

(iv) 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

(v) When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher(s) should seek answers to questions of 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. It is school policy to request assistance from another staff member in conducting an investigation, if deemed necessary.

(vi) 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

(vii) Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face them from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher

(viii) Where the relevant teacher(s) has/have determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, rather than a breach of the Code of Discipline, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied

ix) All cases of bullying behaviour should be reported to the Principal/Deputy Principal.

(x) It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s)

(xi) Teachers who are investigating bullying behaviour should keep a written record of their discussion with those involved in the school's incident report book which is kept in the Principal's office

(xii) In cases where it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, the Principal will meet separately with the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the two parties involved as appropriate, in the presence of another teacher. The principal will outline the results of the investigation and will explain the actions being taken and the reasons for them, referring them to the school policy. The following steps will be taken:

(a) Gowran N.S. will utilise a restorative practice approach in its initial stage of resolving the situation. All staff will be made aware of the importance of this practice.

(b) A verbal warning will be given to the perpetrator to stop the offending behaviour. This will be done in the presence of the perpetrator's parent(s), the Principal and another teacher. The perpetrator will also be requested to apologise to the victim in the presence of the Principal, and another teacher and to give an assurance that the offending behaviour will stop.

(c) With any reported incident of bullying behaviour within the school, the parent/guardian(s) will be kept appraised of developments and stages of the investigation as the situation dictates and as early as reasonably possible.

(d) If bullying reoccurs, a formal contract will be entered into by both parties, and the parent/guardian(s) of both parties will be informed. The contract will be monitored regularly by the Principal with the assistance of the class teacher and/or another member of staff to see that the situation is resolved.

(e) If after the above, the bullying behaviour reoccurs, a formal meeting of the perpetrator, parent/guardian(s), the Principal and the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be held and a formal suspension in line with the school's Code of Behaviour may/will occur. The Chairperson will have the authority to enact an immediate suspension or in certain circumstances may issue a final Chairperson's warning to the perpetrator e.g. where an extended time has elapsed since the last incident. The school's Code of Behaviour will be invoked from this point on.

(xii) It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school.

(xiii) Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved may 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.

(xiv)An additional follow-up meeting with parents of the children involved may take place after an appropriate time to ensure that the matter has been resolved satisfactorily

(xv) Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case according to procedure, the parents will be referred to the school's complaints procedures

(xvi) In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school will advise the parents of their right to complain to the Ombudsman for Children.

RECORDING:

It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner.

Informal pre-determination that bullying has occurred

- Noting and reporting of alleged bullying behaviour witnessed or reported to the staff is to be documented in the Incident Folder. All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher.

- While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher(s), the relevant teacher(s) will use his/her/their professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.
- The relevant teacher must inform the principal of all incidents being investigated.

Formal determination that bullying has occurred

- If it is established by the relevant teacher(s) that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher(s) must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved. A copy of these will be placed in the Incident file.
- The relevant teacher(s), in conjunction with the Principal must use the recording template at Appendix 3 to record the bullying behaviour in cases where he/she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately or appropriately addressed within 20 school days after the bullying behaviour occurred. A copy of this template must be retained by the relevant teacher and a copy stored in the Incident file in the principal's office.

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying involves a whole school approach. Support will be provided for anyone who is bullied by offering them an immediate opportunity to talk about their experience with their teacher or other teachers, along with continuing support when they feel they may need it. A Behaviour Contract may be drawn up between the victim and the bully (which may also include their parents) and reviewed on an ongoing basis. Given the complexity of bullying behaviour, no one intervention/support programme works in all situations but in all cases a victim will be assured that the school community will help them and put monitoring procedures in place to safeguard them.

8. **Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils**: The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring of 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 _____.

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. 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. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: _____   Signed: _____

    (Chairperson of BOM)   (Principal)

Date:_____

               Date:_____

Date of next review: _____

To develop practices to ensure a positive school culture and climate is prioritised across the school we will undertake the following:

- Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.
- Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- We will agree key respect messages and display them in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school .The pupils will be involved in the development of these messages and they will be cross referenced with the Code of Behaviour
- We will endeavour to catch them being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention and have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.
- We will consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN.
- Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use. Refer to the Acceptable User policy and the Mobile Phone and Electronic Gadget policy.
- Actively involve parents and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media.
- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.