

## **Anti-Bullying Policy**

The aim of this school is to provide a safe and secure learning environment for all children, parents and teachers. Bullying behaviour, by its very nature, undermines the quality of education of the pupils and imposes psychological damage. Therefore, it is an issue which must be firmly addressed through a range of school/home-based strategies.

### **What is Bullying?**

Bullying is repeated aggressive, verbal, psychological or physical conduct by an individual or group against another. Examples include physical aggression, damage to property, intimidation, isolation, name-calling or teasing. Non- Verbal and E-Bullying are also included. Child to child bullying, teacher to child, intra-staff bullying, parent to staff and parent to child bullying are examples of the areas where bullying may occur. Isolated instances of aggressive behaviour will be dealt with under The Code of Behaviour. However when the behaviour is systematic and on-going, it is bullying. We recognise that there are many parties involved in bullying – those who are bullied, those who bully, those who witness the bullying and families, staff and teachers who try to support and work with all parties involved. It is important that each member of staff is able to distinguish between incidents of bullying and isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour. Incidents of bullying will be treated seriously and promptly because of the serious effects of bullying on the victim and for all involved.

### **Aims:**

- To foster a school ethos of mutual and self-respect.
- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour.
- To outline, promote and raise awareness of preventative approaches that can be used in response to reported instances of bullying.
- To develop a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour.
- To outline procedures for noting and reporting instances of bullying behaviour.
- To outline procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.

### **Prevention of Bullying:**

The prevention of bullying is an integral part of our Code of Behaviour and SPHE programmes. The Stay Safe Programme is taught in every class, every year in the second term. Central to the need to prevent bullying is the creation of a positive school climate which treasures the respect for the individual. This will be initiated by class discussions, on a regular basis, on topics which promote positive attitudes towards others. This can be done through a range of curricular activities e.g. English, Social Studies, Art, Drama, PE and Religious Education. Different parts of the SPHE programme which focus on promoting self-esteem, assertiveness and open discussion

will be taught to the children. Comprehensive supervision by the teachers on yard duty, and in their classrooms and cloakrooms mean that all areas of school activity are kept under observation and will assist in countering bullying. Children are carefully monitored and observed. Information talks and discussions for parents will be arranged so that parents will become familiar with all aspects of the problem.

- An expert speaker will address parents at a meeting in September each year.
- This policy is to be reviewed regularly at Parents Association, Board of Management and Staff meetings.
- A buddy system is implemented where seniors support juniors and seniors are given responsibility to help “Stamp Out Bullying” in our school.
- The spirit of this policy applies to all after school activities and get together.
- Secondary school students or young adults who have survived bullying are invited to speak to senior classes about the consequences of bullying.
- The culture of our school is central to the prevention of bullying. Parents are welcome to talk to teachers at any time by appointment or informally at the school gate. Regular communication between parents and teachers is part of our way of life.

### **Child to Child Bullying:**

- Child to child bullying will be dealt with by the class teacher, the Principal and parents involved. Teachers will support all involved and records of details will be maintained.
- Instances will be discussed, assessed and a plan of intervention will be agreed with a view to conflict resolution.
- Parents will be fully informed. The Principal and teachers will meet with the parents of the child who is seen to be bullying and separately with the parents of the victim.
- The children themselves may be required to attend these meetings, separately.
- The child who is bullying will be placed on report.
- The child who is bullying will have his/her behaviour in all areas monitored during the day. The child has three meetings with his/her teacher and together they decide on what is to be written about that part of the day. All positive behaviour, progress and improvement will be noted. At the end of the day the teacher records his/her own comment.
- Teachers will focus as much as possible on the positive qualities and efforts of the child and motivate him/her to move away from negative behaviour.
- The child should see that parents and school are working together, so the co-operation of parents is essential.
- Initially a review of the reports will be carried out on a daily or weekly basis in

a meeting with the Principal, teacher parents and child. If progress is being made longer intervals may be decided upon.

- The child who is the victim of bullying will also meet with the Principal, teachers and parents. The aim of these meetings will be to address emotional needs and to devise strategies which help the child deal with the bullying. The child will be listened to carefully. All details will be recorded. Preventative action will be taken and appropriate changes made. The problem will be acknowledged and discussed openly. Reassurance will be offered and the child will be thanked for disclosing the problem.
- If further advice or intervention is deemed necessary the Principal will seek advice and professional help from the relevant authorities and from NEPS, or the following agencies: The Anti-Bullying Centre (01-6082573), Victims Support (1800661771) Trinity College Dublin Anti- Bullying Research Centre, (01-6601011). Parents are referred to the booklet- Stop it! Steps to Address Bullying (NDP)

### **Sanctions:**

- Should the above interventions fail and the bullying continue a programme of appropriate sanctions may be implemented by the Principal and Teacher, in consultation with the Parents and Board of Management?
- Sanctions aim to encourage positive behaviour and support the esteem of the child.
- Sanctions may include a period of suspension during which there will be on going consultation with parents to decide on appropriate actions to be taken in the best interest of the child.
- Suspension will be reported in writing by the Principal to the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

### **Procedures for Reporting Incidents of Bullying:**

Pupils are encouraged to report incidents of bullying to a member of staff, to the bus driver and to a parent immediately so that the incident can be investigated expeditiously.

All reports of bullying will be noted and investigated. In this way, pupils will gain confidence in reporting.

All cases of bullying behaviour will be reported to the Principal.

Parents will be informed as soon as possible so that they are given the opportunity to discuss the matter with the teacher.

All reports of incidents of bullying will be recorded in detail.

All non-teaching personnel are encouraged to report incidents of bullying ie. Bus driver, caretaker, secretary, parents who volunteer etc.

### **Procedures for Investigating Bullying:**

All reported incidents of bullying will be investigated outside the classroom situation. The teacher will speak separately to the pupils involved to get both sides of the story. All interviews will be handled with sensitivity and in a calm manner.

If there is more than one involved, each pupil will be interviewed individually. Each pupil will be asked to give his/her account of what happened.

It will be made clear to the pupils engaged in the bullying behaviour that he/she is in breach of the Code of Behaviour and they must be made aware of the situation from the victim's point of view. Parents of both bully and victim will be asked to come to the school separately to discuss the incidents. Regular meetings will be arranged as a follow-up.

### **Programme of Work with Victims and those who Bully:**

Pupils involved in bullying need assistance on an on-going basis. As well as meeting with parents, pupils may be in need of counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.

Incidents of bullying behaviour may extend beyond the school, especially on the journey to and from school. The bus driver and all adults are encouraged to play a positive role in assisting the school to counter bullying behaviour. The spirit of this policy applies at all times, in or out of school.

### **Bullying By Adults:**

- Intra-Staff Bullying: Garrafrauns N.S adopts the procedures outlined in section c(c2) of the INTO booklet: “ Working Together: Procedures and Policies for Positive Staff Relations (INTO Website)
- Teacher-Child Bullying: The parent should complain to the teacher in question, discuss the issues and if necessary refer to the Principal. A framework for resolution will be agreed where possible. Where further investigation is warranted both parties should refer the matter in writing to the Board of Management for investigation. The welfare and well-being of the child is paramount in this instance.

- Parent-Teacher Bullying: The Principal will be informed in the first instance and the Principal will meet with both parties. If necessary the Board of Management should be informed in writing and all efforts to resolve conflict will be made.
- Parent or Visitor to the school- Child Bullying: In the first instance the complaint should be referred to the class teacher and subsequently to the Principal.
- Principal-Parent or Child Bullying: The matter should be raised with the Principal if possible and then referred to the Board of Management.

**Evaluation:**

The school’s Anti-Bullying Code will be subject to continuous review in the light of bullying behaviour encountered. It will be reviewed as a matter of course at the beginning of the year and at termly staff meetings. Parents will be fully informed of our Anti-Bullying Policy and their support and assistance will be sought. A questionnaire for parents and pupils will be distributed termly to evaluate our policy. A comment box will be placed in the hall to allow parents or students to alert the teachers to possible bullying behaviour or improvements which could be added to the policy. The Parents Association, Staff and The Board of Management will be asked to discuss and ratify this policy yearly.

Ratification:

Board of Management: 7/2/2013

Mary Burke

Chairperson

Reviewed: October 2017\_\_\_\_\_ {Chairperson}

\_\_\_\_\_ {Principal}