

Creora National School

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 Creora National School has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour.
2. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* which were published in September 2013. 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 parents 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 is based on inclusivity
 - encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a nonthreatening environment
 - involves collaboration among staff and between staff and pupils 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
 - Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils and explicitly address the issues of identity-based bullying,
 - Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils and explicitly address the issues of 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:

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 (there are many types of cyber-bullying, listed and explained in [Appendix 1](#))
- Identity-based bullying such as, racist bullying

- bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community.
- Homophobic bullying and transphobic-bullying
- 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 incident, 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 *AntiBullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows;
 - The Class Teacher
 - The Principal
 - The Deputy Principal

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber- bullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows
 - All school activities will be supervised and monitored at all times with particular emphasis on those occasions where bullying is more likely to occur such as assembly times, play time and dismissal.
 - The Golden Rules used in the Code of Behaviour will be displayed and discussed with the children in class and at assembly. These golden rules are *Be gentle, Be kind and helpful, Be honest, Work hard, Look after property and Listen to people*.
 - Children will be taught the “Kind Hands”, “Kind Feet” and “Kind Words” approach to playing. Older children should be taught the consequences of loose talk and should be taught the “Think” approach which is an acronym for Is it **truthful, honest, inspiring, necessary and kind**.
 - Children will be encouraged to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying nature. They will be helped to differentiate between incidents of a minor nature and those that constitute bullying. They will be taught the difference between “telling tales” and asking for help.
 - A “Friendship star” will be used in the junior yard.
 - The following signs will be placed on windows facing the yard and next to the statue of Holy Mary in order to remind children to be respectful...*Respect Other People Be Gentle Follow the rules Include others in your game*
 - Respect for others will be referred to every morning at prayer time by the principal and staff will encourage pupils to show respect for each other at all times.
 - Staff will model pro-social behaviour and explain to children the difference between appearing too passive and acting too aggressively towards others.

- Staff will observe pupil behaviour in the classroom and note which pupils sit on the fringes of the classroom during recreational periods and which pupils almost never participate in class discussion.
 - In exceptional circumstances, the principal will obtain permission from the parents of children with SEN to speak to the class about the child's difficulty in order to prevent bullying e.g. a child with severe EBD or a child with Tourette's Syndrome, ASD.
 - The Stay Safe Programme will be fully implemented in the school.
 - All strands of the SPHE curriculum, including lessons on anti-bullying will be delivered to all classes.
 - SPHE classes on tolerance, identity, diversity and recognition of prejudices will be delivered to age appropriate classes in an effort to address homophobic and transphobic bullying. These topics are further explored through the "Inferencing" and "Synthesising" books used in the Literacy initiative "Building Bridges".
 - Specific assembly mornings will be dedicated to moral stories on respect, diversity, identity and tolerance.
 - Extra curricular activities will be encouraged to help children develop pupils' self esteem and the discipline of following rules e.g. in sport.
 - A bullying awareness week will be held in each term. The dates of this week will be decided at the first staff meeting each September. During that week special emphasis will be placed on recognising bullying and dealing with it. Teachers will provide role plays at assembly to explicitly teach strategies for dealing with bullies.
 - The issue of bystanders will be dealt with at specific assemblies. Children will be told that watching and doing nothing enables bullies and makes the victim feel more unhappy and alone.
 - Advice sheets for parents will be available on the website ([Appendix 5](#))
 - The Parents' Council will provide a speaker every second year to address children and parents in Fifth and Sixth classes on the issue of cyber-bullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
 - There will be no unsupervised internet use for pupils.
 - Pupils from 3rd to 6th will sign a contract that forms part of our AUP policy.
 - Chapter 7 from *Webwise Primary Teachers' Handbook* will be taught to children in 5th and 6th classes on the theme of "Respectful Online Communication For Children". It will also be explored while addressing the "Persuasive" genre in writing classes e.g. "Should children be given smartphones".
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 as follows
- Each teacher will investigate and record any serious incident of intentional negative behaviour within the classroom.
 - The teacher supervising the yard will record any incident of intentional negative behaviour in the yard duty book and this will be dealt with in accordance with the school's code of behaviour. The supervising teacher will alert the class teacher if an incident has been recorded. The class teacher should consider the incident in the context of his/her own diaries and class context and any other relevant information which he/she may have. A decision will then be made by the class teacher on whether or not this incident warrants inclusion in his/her own incident book.
 - Using both recording systems as information, any pupil involved in two incidents of intentional negative behaviour will see the principal. Here the class teacher and the

principal will talk to the pupil in an effort to make him/her understand the consequences of his/her behaviour and to encourage him/her to mend his/her ways. It will be noted in the Pastoral Care Book and circulated to all staff members. This book

is updated when necessary and circulated to all members of staff.

- If a pupil is involved in three incidents of intentional negative behaviour during an academic year, the pupil's parents will be informed. Parents of both offending child/children and injured child/children will be informed.
- A further incident will involve parents coming to speak to the principal. Parents are then in a position to help and support their children before a crisis occurs. The principal should record details of the meeting in the Incident Book.
- An intervention plan is put in place to support both offending child/children and injured child and is monitored daily. Such an intervention could involve a temporary removal of privileges, detention during break or an essay to explain reasons for poor behaviour for the offending child/children along with a parental sanction. Help and support will be given to the offending child in the form of understanding why he/she did this and continuing to work with his/her parents in an effort to change behaviour. It may involve a sanction such as time out in the multi sensory room. The nature of the misbehaviour and the age of the child will determine the strategy to be employed
- Injured children may have a strategy building chat with Mrs. Barrett.. They will be assured that the school community will help them and monitoring procedures will be put in place to safeguard them.
- Where a parent approaches the school with an alleged report of bullying, the principal should record it in the designated incidents book. The principal should then investigate the incident.
- All incidents should be investigated according to the procedure noted below.
- If matters are not resolved at this stage, it may be referred to the Board of Management and advice will be sought from them.

The procedure for investigating should be as follows:

- It should be conducted in a calm, unemotional way.
- It should be investigated outside the classroom.
- The teacher should only investigate in the presence of another adult (teacher, principal, SNA)
- Answers will be sought to questions of What, Where, When, Why and What.
- A No-Blame approach is taken at this stage.
- Written accounts are kept, clearly stating facts, not opinions.
- An interview takes place of the alleged offending child/children.
- If a group is involved, each member is met individually and then as a group. Each member will be asked for his/her account. Bystanders may also be asked for an account to establish exactly what happened.
- If it is concluded that pupils have been involved in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him/her that he/she is in breach of the Code of Behaviour and the relevant teacher(s) will try to get him/her to understand the situation from the victim's point of view.
- The relevant teacher will inform the Principal by way of [Appendix 3](#) report being completed and submitted.

- In such cases where a report has been submitted, separate meetings or discussion will take place with the parents or guardians of the two parties involved as appropriate to:
 - a) explain the actions being taken and the reasons for them, referring them to the school policy
 - b) discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions taken by the school.
- The use of sanctions is an important element in the school's Code of Behaviour. They are used in a corrective way and are intended to help the child to change and improve his or her behavioural patterns. The nature of the misbehaviour and the age of the child will determine the strategy to be employed.

Disciplinary Actions and Sanctions to deal with Bullying:

Bullying is a serious misdemeanour and the sanctions applied are the same as those listed below for serious misdemeanours. It must be made clear to all involved that (each set of parents and pupils) in any situation where disciplinary actions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his/her parents and the school. The nature of the misbehaviour and the age of the child will determine the strategy to be employed. Actions will include:

- Apology to the injured child/children.
 - A record is kept. Pupil/s write an account of the incident/s that lead to the bullying behaviour and what they have learned from this episode in their lives – parents must sign this.
 - Pupils may be removed from activity if endangering self or others.
 - Pupil is sent to Principal/Deputy Principal and made aware that suspension could be a possibility
 - In cases where it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred the Principal/Deputy Principal informs parents.
 - Suspension procedures may follow if deemed necessary by the school authorities.
 - Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents must be referred to the school's complaints procedures.
 - In the event where 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 with the Ombudsman for Children.
7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows
- All staff dealing with a bullying incident will offer support and comfort to the victim.
 - Staff will promote emotional resilience in children by giving them the following vocabulary frameworks : ***I am a good person*** and ***I respect myself and others*** ***I can find ways to solve problems*** and ***I can control myself*** and ***I have people who love me and people to help me.***
 - The school may refer to external agencies and authorities where appropriate e.g. SESS, HSE, NEPS.

A behaviour plan may be put in place if necessary.

- If deemed necessary, advice may be sought from the National Education Psychological Service (NEPS) in relation to managing the behaviour of a pupil.
- Further interventions where appropriate will be put in place on a case by case basis.

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 the 10th February, 2014. A copy of this policy will be made available to the DES and the patron if requested.

11. 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 DES.

This policy was ratified by the Board of management on 10th February 2014. It was signed by the Principal, Catherine Tobin and the Chairperson, Pat Hanley. It will be reviewed on an annual basis using the review checklist.

Date of next review is September 2018.

Explanation of Acronyms used

NEWB	National Educational Welfare Board
SEN	Special Education Needs

EBD	Emotional behaviour Disorder
ASD	Autistic Spectrum Disability
SNA	Special Needs Assistant
SESS	Special Education Support Service
HSE	Health Service Executive
NEPS	National Education Psychological Service DES
	Department of Education & Skills

Appendix 5 Advice for Parents

Signs of bullying

As an adult, what are the signs I should look out for?

One of the most terrible effects of bullying is that the bullied child will very often deny that it's happening.

It's important that you don't put even more pressure on a child who may be bullied. Forcing someone to tell when they don't want to can itself be a form of bullying. But there are certain signs to look out for if you have suspicions.

These can include:

A change in behaviour, such as suffering a lack of concentration and/or becoming withdrawn, excessively clingy, depressed, fearful, emotionally up and down

Afraid and anxious when going to or coming from school

Happy at the weekend but not during the week. A drop in performance in school.

Physical signs: stomach aches, headaches, sleep difficulties, bedwetting, bruising

Bingeing on food

Unexplained bruises

School performance steadily getting worse

Being generally nervous, tense, unhappy

Not explaining suspicious incidents

Signs of being isolated from others of the same age

Signs of regular interference with personal property, books, etc. Frequently asking for (or perhaps stealing) money.

Although these can also indicate problems other than bullying, it's important that you don't ignore them. Try to encourage the child to talk about what's going on, either to you or to another trusted adult.

How to approach the subject

Broach the subject obliquely, giving the victim the option to talk about it or not

Let them know that you are willing to listen at any time

When they start to talk, listen carefully to what they have to say

Once they begin to discuss the bullying, it may seem to be all they can talk about. Be patient and let them go on – it's better for them to let it all out than to bottle it up.

What to do next

Don't over-react – victims need rational advice and help, not emotional overload Believe the victim. No one should have to put up with bullying.

Ask victims if they have any suggestions about changing the situation Contact the school as soon as your satisfied that the allegation is well founded Seek advice from an individual or a support group with experience in this area.

What should I do if my child is being bullied?

Discuss bullying openly and regularly with your children – don't wait for them to raise the issue.

Thank the child for disclosing the problem. Confidence is the first casualty of bullying, so let your child know you believe them and will support them. Tell them it's not their fault.

Listen carefully. Don't rush the story. Show you are concerned and sympathetic.

Get all the details – what, who, when, where, etc.

Write down the details and check the information with your child. This will be important for any meetings which may come later.

Take action. Don't wait to see if it all blows over.

Make appropriate changes that may help prevent your child being singled out and to build their confidence at the same time (e.g. new clothes, different hairstyle, etc.) Seek professional help if necessary (e.g. speech therapy, dental work, etc.) Bring your information to the relevant authority, and insist on getting an adequate response.

How do I approach the School?

Make an appointment

Speak to an appropriate teacher as soon as possible.

Think about asking someone to accompany you for support.

Don't exaggerate. Be honest and stick to the facts as you understand them.

Use your notes to make sure you don't forget to mention any important points.

Recognise that you may be upset when you speak to the teacher.

Accept that your child may not have told you all the facts, and that there may be another side to the story.

Ask for a copy of the school's policy on bullying.

Find out what action the school intends to take.

Arrange for a follow-up meeting with the teacher to measure any improvement in the situation.

After the meeting, you may wish to make a note of what was agreed and send a copy to the teacher.

If you are not happy with the teacher's response, make an appointment to see the principal.

If you still feel dissatisfied having talked to the principal, contact members of the Board of Management who are there to represent your interests. Remember to keep copies of all letters you send and receive.

If your child is happy to have you attend, you can request that all interviews with him or her on this issue are conducted in your presence.

If the problem persists, then you should consider moving your child to another class or even another school if this is possible.

You should consider carefully whether further aftercare is needed following a move to another class or school.

How can I tell if my child bullies others? Here are

some indicators of bullying behaviour:

a tendency to bully family members being

a victim of bullying

regularly witnessing bullying behaviour in their environment

being frequently short-tempered and/or aggressive having past experiences which can still cause negative feelings

bringing home items that you know weren't bought

speaking of others in a negative way, perhaps on the basis of their appearance or beliefs of social status

showing an interest in violent behaviour

showing little sensitivity towards others

having low self esteem being the subject of previous complaints or suggestions of bullying behaviour

Although these can also indicate problems other than bullying, it's important that you don't ignore them. Try to encourage the child to talk about what's going on, either to you or another trusted adult.

Directory of Support Services

Anti-Bullying Centre (01) 6082573

CAB – Campaign Against Bullying (01) 2887976

Childline Freephone 1800 666660

Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (01) 2300061

ISPCC (01) 6794944

The National Association for Parents Support (NAPS) (0502) 20598

Parentline (Parents under Stress) (01) 8733500

Samaritans (Callsave) 1850 609090

Sticks and Stones Theatre Company (01) 2807065

Trinity College Dublin – Anti-Bullying Research Centre (01) 6601011
Victim Support 1800 661771

Some Useful Websites

Bullying @ school information – www.scre.ac.uk/bully

Bullying information on Bullying Child/Parents/Teachers www.lfcc.on.ca/bully

Bullying in schools www.ericece.org/pubs/digests/1997/banks97

What Parents should know about Bullying – www.accesseric.org/resources/parent/bully

Anti-Bullying Campaign Tools for Teachers - www.antibullyingcampaign.ie

Appendix

ABC Bullying at School, the Anti-Bullying Research & Resource Centre Trinity College, Dublin

You Can Beat Bullying - A Guide for Young People, Kidscape The abc of Bullying, Marie Murray & Colm Keane, 1998 – Mercier Press

What do You know about Bullying, Pete Sanders, 2000 – Aladdin Books Ltd.

Bullying and Harassment in the Workplace, Lucy Costigan, 1998 – Columba Press

Bullying – don't let them suffer in silence, Save the Children (Resource Pack

Appendix 1

WHAT IS CYBER-BULLYING?

There are many types of cyber-bullying. The more common types are:

1. **Text messages** – can be threatening or cause discomfort. Also included here is 'Bluejacking' (the sending of anonymous text messages over short distances using bluetooth wireless technology)
2. **Picture/video-clips via mobile phone cameras** – images sent to others to make the victim feel threatened or embarrassed
3. **Mobile phone calls** – silent calls, abusive messages or stealing the victim's phone and using it to harass others, to make them believe the victim is responsible
4. **Emails** – threatening or bullying emails, often sent using a pseudonym or somebody else's name
5. **Chat room bullying** – menacing or upsetting responses to children or young people when they are in a web-based chat room
6. **Instant messaging (IM)** – unpleasant messages sent while children conduct real-time conversations online using MSM (Microsoft Messenger), Yahoo Chat or similar tools
7. **Bullying via websites** – use of defamatory blogs (web logs), personal websites and online personal 'own web space' sites such as You Tube, Facebook, Ask.fm, Bebo (which works by signing on in one's school, therefore making it easy to find a victim) and Myspace – although there are others.

Explanation of slang terms used when referring to cyber-bullying activity:

1. **'Flaming'**: Online fights using electronic messages with angry and vulgar language
2. **'Harassment'**: Repeatedly sending offensive, rude, and insulting messages
3. **'Cyber Stalking'**: Repeatedly sending messages that include threats of harm or are highly intimidating or engaging in other on-line activities that make a person afraid for his or her own safety

4. '**Denigration**': 'Dissing' someone online. Sending or posting cruel gossip or rumors about a person to damage his or her reputation or friendships
5. '**Impersonation**': Pretending to be someone else and sending or posting material online that makes someone look bad, gets her/him in trouble or danger, or damages her/his reputation or friendships
6. '**Outing and Trickery**': Tricking someone into revealing secret or embarrassing information which is then shared online
7. '**Exclusion**': Intentionally excluding someone from an on-line group, like a 'buddy list'

This list is not exhaustive and the terms used continue to change