Dunmore Community School

<u>Anti-Bullying Policy</u>

Dunmore Community School does not tolerate bullying in any form. Everybody in our school is committed to ensuring a safe and caring environment, which promotes respect and understanding for all.

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the C*ode of Behaviour Guidelines* issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of Dunmore Community School Dunmore 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.

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:
1. A positive school culture and climate which-
   a) is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
   b) encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
   c) promotes respectful relationships across the school community.
2. Effective leadership;
3. A school-wide approach;
4. A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
5. 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.
6. Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils.
7. Supports for staff;
8. Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
9. On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

What is Bullying?
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.

Examples of bullying include:

- Any forms of physical violence such as hitting, pushing, spitting.
- Using offensive names, teasing, malicious gossip and spreading rumours about others or their families.
- So called "slagging" of students on a repetitive basis.
- Using put-downs, making little of others' abilities and achievements.
- Writing notes and graffiti about others.
- Making degrading comments about another person's age, appearance, and gender, social, religious or cultural background.
- Passing comments about another person's sexuality or perceived sexuality.
- Calling people "gay" with the intention to hurt.
- Interfering with another's property by stealing, hiding, damaging or destroying it.
- Demanding money, equipment etc, often accompanied by threats.
- Making suggestive comments or other forms of sexual abuse.
- Using gestures, which convey intimidatory and frightening messages.
- Forcing others to act against their will.
- Excluding and or isolating students from a group.
- Making comments or judgements to students regarding disabilities.
- Cyber Bullying: Using text messages or any form of technology (e.g. camera phones/ e-mail) to intimidate, make threats or spread rumours.
- Use social networking sites e.g., twitter, Facebook, etc. to intimidate, make threats or spread rumours.
- 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 will 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.

Relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying in Dunmore C.S are:

Principal- Mr McManus
Deputy Principal –Mrs. Griffiths
Chaplain-Mrs Clesham

Educational and Preventative strategies used in Dunmore C.S.

- Dunmore C.S. will nominate relevant teachers.
- S.P.H.E. will be the conduit through which awareness of bullying will be taught.
- Posters shall be placed on notice boards to raise awareness and acceptance of L.G.B.T.
- Staff will be familiarised with the anti- bullying policies.
- Deputy Principal will be responsible for bringing the policy to the attention of new staff.
- Anti-bullying education through talks, guest speakers, drama etc shall be provided for students and parents on a regular basis.
- BOM will be given our policy and sign off on it.
- Yearheads shall specifically deal with educating students in bullying awareness at the commencement of each year and through follow-up assemblies.
- A week entitled Anti-Bullying week will be introduced which would highlight issues and help raise awareness of bullying.
- Parents are encouraged to observe signs of distress, discuss bullying with their children and contact the school if bullying is suspected. We highlight this in our October meeting with parents.
- We foster an atmosphere of respect, care and openness in our school so that it is easy for students, staff and parents to voice their concerns if they need to, about an issue.

The School's Procedures for Investigation and Recording.

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) in line with the DES guidelines.

- All reports of bullying ,including anonymous, will be dealt with by the relevant teacher.

- Each person involved will be asked to submit their account in writing.

- If it is established that bullying behaviour has taken place the relevant teacher shall inform parents.

- All parties involved will be made aware that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his/ her parents and the school.

- In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days it must be recorded by the relevant teacher in recording template.

Sanctions:
The severity of the sanction will be determined by the degree and the frequency of the bullying engaged in. In any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school. Sanctions may include the following:
- The student may be put on Daily Report.
- Detention at Lunch or Evening.
- Monitoring of student in school by class teachers.
- Discussion of student at Board of Management meeting.
- Suspension

The School's Programme of Support for Working with Pupils Affected By Bullying is As Follows:

- Through S.P.H.E. support will be given to the person who has been bullied.
- Support will be given by chaplain to those affected by bullying.
- The school will support students through our Tutor system at Junior level and Our Care Team for all students.
- The School will provide talks on bullying for Parents and students at regular intervals.
- Where the incident is serious and the behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive the school will consult the H.S.E. Children and Family Social Services.
- The school shall ensure that the policy is regularly reviewed.
- The Principal shall bring a record of analysis of bullying incidents once a year to the B.O.M.
- The Principal shall provide a forum at Staff meeting to discuss the implementation and effectiveness of the Anti Bullying Policy

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.

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.

Roles and Key Responsibilities

Board of Management:
- Has the responsibility to ensure that an anti -bullying policy is in place.
- Will receive notification at Board meeting of Incidents of Bullying and the outcomes
- An annual review must take place, using the standard notification form in accordance with the 2013 Department of Education Guidelines.

Principal:
- Has to ensure that the policy and the implementation of activities outlined in this policy will be carried out.
- To report to the BOM on the overall number of cases reported since the last meeting and confirmation these cases are being dealt with in accordance with the schools anti bullying policy.

Staff members
- Active role modelling in the school and the classroom. This gives students the "cue" as to appropriate behaviour.
- Staff are involved in supervision of students according to the school rota.
- There is space within the teaching of all subjects to foster an attitude of respect for all: to promote the value of diversity; to address prejudice and stereotyping and to highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- Many teachers are involved in the delivery of social and personal education to our students in teaching SHPE and religion classes
- The chaplain and the guidance counsellor will offer support and assistance to students who are bullied or the bullies.
- Teachers with ICT skills have developed the school IT policy which sets down the rules for Computer and internet usage in the school.
- Referrals to NEPS or appropriate outside agencies can be arranged by the guidance counsellor, chaplain or school management.

Parents
- To be aware of the contents of this policy.
- To make yourselves aware of all the means that a students can bully.
- To support your son/daughter by providing boundaries around activities that allow students access to social networking sites and other technologies that can be used to bully others.
- To inform the school, as soon as you become aware of any difficulty/concern you have regarding your child.

We believe that our students need and deserve a safe and happy environment in order to learn effectively and reach their potential as people and we strive to make Dunmore Community School such a place.

 This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____

This policy has been made available to school personnel, and is provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

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 notification 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: _____   Signed_____
(Chairperson of Board of Management)   (Principal)

Date: _____   Date: _____