**Leap 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 Leap National 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 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) 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;

**Key Elements of a positive school culture and climate in Leap N.S. include the following:**

* The school acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual and his/her worth as a human being.
* The school promote positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among all its members.
* The school prohibits vulgar, offensive, sectarian or other aggressive behaviour or language by any of its members.
* The school has a clear commitment to promoting equity in general and gender equity in particular in all aspects of its functioning.
* The school has the capacity to change in response to pupil’s needs.
* The school identifies aspects of curriculum through which positive and lasting influences can be exerted towards forming pupils’ attitudes and values.
* The school takes particular care of ‘at risk’ pupils and uses its monitoring systems to facilitate early intervention where necessary and it responds to the needs, fears or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner.
* The school recognises the need to work in partnership with and keep parents informed on procedures to improve relationships on a school-wide basis.
* The school recognises the role of parents in equipping the pupil with a range of life-skills.
* The school recognises the role of other community agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying.
* The school promotes habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the interdependence of people in groups and communities.
* The school promotes qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among all its members both in school and out of school .
* 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.

The following are some actions that will be taken to help build a positive school culture and climate and to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour.

* 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.
* Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.
* Catch them being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
* 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.
* Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
* Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.
* Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use.
* Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.
* 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.
* Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.
* All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
* Ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.

**(b) Effective leadership**

**(c) A school-wide approach**

**(d) A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact**

**(e) 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;

**(f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils**

**(g) Supports for staff**

**(h) Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and**

**(i) 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 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.

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| The list of examples below is non exhaustive. |

**Examples of bullying behaviours**

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| **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** | **IT IS ILLEGAL FOR A CHILD UNDER THE AGE OF 13 TO HAVE A FACEBOOK ACCOUNT.**   * **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 * Teasing,mocking, excluding of student who is wearing a face covering eg. face mask |
| **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 |

4. The relevant teacher for investigating and dealing with bullying is the Class Teachers.

**Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.**

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-

bullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying and sexual orientations) that will be used by the school are as:

**School-wide approach**

* A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.
* An integral part of RSE is learning to respect others; this will include respect for families or individuals who are different from the norm.
* The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
* The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Pupils will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.
* Whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develops an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils’ lives and the need to respond to it-prevention and intervention.
* An annual audit of professional development needs with a view to assessing staff requirements through internal staff knowledge/expertise and external sources
* School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community.
* Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra- curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.
* Involvement of the pupils in contributing to a safe school environment that can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
* Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school-to be displayed publicly in classrooms and in common areas of the school.
* The school’s anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parent(s)/guardian(s)s are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school.
* The implementation of regular whole school awareness measures e.g. annual Friendship Week, Bullying Awareness Week and regular school assemblies by principal and class teacher.
* Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. 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.
* 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 privately.
* Make a phone call to the school or to a trusted teacher in the school.
* Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
* Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.

• If children are using the word ‘gay’ in a negative fashion it is better not to ignore it in

the hope that it will go away. The same advice would apply for any instance of bullying.

• The school will develop a strategy for responding to children who have

questions about sexual orientation or who are taunting others about being gay. This

will be done in the context of the school’s ethos and RSE policy and with the

awareness that primary school children are probably too young to engage in any

detailed discussion of sexual identity.

* The school encourages parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied.
* The development of an Acceptable Use Policy in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored, as is the pupils’ use of mobile phones.

**Implementation of curriculum**

* The full implementation of the SPHE curriculum and the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.
* Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
* School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes, e.g. Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme.
* School wide delivery of lessons on **Cyber Bullying** , Be Safe-Be Web wise, Web wise Primary teachers’ resources.
* Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes at primary level. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardai, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying
* The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.
* The school will implement the advice in “Sexual Orientation advice for schools”.

**Links to other policies**

* The following school policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to bullying, e.g. Code of Behaviour, Child Protections policy, Supervision of pupils, Acceptable Use policy, Attendance, Sporting activities.

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:

**Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying**

**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);**

Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s)) understand this approach from the outset.

**Reporting bullying behaviour**

* Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.
* All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
* Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;

**Investigating and dealing with incidents: Style of approach**

* In investigating and dealing with bullying, the (relevant)teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
* Parent(s)/guardian(s) 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;
* Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.
* Where possible incidents should be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
* 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;
* When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher 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;
* 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;
* Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after the interview by the teacher;

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

* In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy). The school should give parent(s)/guardian(s) an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the pupils;
* Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, 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;
* It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parent(s)/guardian(s)) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school;

**Follow up and recording**

* In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:

- Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;

- Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;

-Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable;

-Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardian(s)s or the school Principal or Deputy Principal

* 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.
* Where a parent(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must be referred, as appropriate, to the school’s complaints procedures.
* In the event that a parent(s)/guardian(s) has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

**Recording of bullying behaviour**

The school’s procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

**Informal- pre-determination that bullying has occurred**

* All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. The record will be made in the incident book.
* All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher
* The teacher will report the actions taken and any discussions with those involved

regarding same

* The relevant teacher must inform the principal of all incidents being investigated.

**Formal Stage 1-determination that bullying has occurred**

* If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher 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.
* The school in consultation with the relevant teacher/s has a protocol for the storage of all records retained by the relevant teacher.

**Formal Stage 2**

The relevant teacher must use the recording template at **Appendix 1** to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

a) in cases where he/she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred; and

b) In certain circumstances (i.e. serious misbehaviour) as outlined in the school’s code of behaviour, bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal.

The Records of Bullying Behaviour as designed by the Department of Education & Skills will be retained in a locked cabinet in the office. Only Class Teachers have assess to these Records and they will be retained until the child has reached their 30th Birthday.

**Established intervention strategies**

* Teacher interviews with all pupils
* Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process
* Working with parent(s)/guardian(s)s to support school interventions
* Circle Time
* Bullyingawarenessweek.org

7. The school’s programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:

* All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience e.g.

- Group work such as circle time

* If pupils require counselling of further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.
* Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

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.

* Parent/Guardians are informed at the beginning of each school year that the Board of Management does not accept responsibility for any pupil who is on the school grounds before 9 a.m. There will be no supervising adult on the school grounds before this time.
* School finishes at 3 p.m. (2 p.m. for Junior & Senior Infants). Pupils are escorted by class teacher to the school gate. Parents are requested to collect their child/children on time, and to make alternative arrangements for their child’s collection if they are unable to do so themselves. In the event of this occurring, parents need to inform the school.
* A Supervision Rota is drawn up at the start of each year and adhered to.
* The SNA accompanies Special Educational Needs pupils.
* All Internet sessions are supervised by a teacher.

**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 Board of Management) (Principal)

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

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