ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Introductory Statement

This policy was devised by staff in consultation with parents and members of the Board of Management of Enable Ireland Sandymount School. Consideration has been given to the particular needs and circumstances of the individual students who attend this special school. This policy document should be read in conjunction with the Schools Code of Behaviour.

Content of Policy

1. Rationale and Implementation

2. Whole School Approach in Promoting Positive Behaviour

3. Guidelines for Positive Behaviour

4. Definition of Bullying Behaviour

5. Impact of Bullying behaviour

6. Procedures for reporting and investigating incidents

7. Preventative Strategies and Programme of Support

8. Supervision of Pupils

9. Cyber bullying

Rationale

This policy has been developed as it is a requirement under DES Circular 045/2013 Anti-Bullying procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools.

Aims

The aims of the Anti-bullying policy of Enable Ireland Sandymount School are:

- To ensure that staff and parents have a shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact

- To eliminate any possibility of using technology access to indulge in cyber bullying

Implementation

Every member of the school community has a role to play in the implementation of the Anti-Bullying Policy. We believe that a positive learning environment is based on the quality of relationship between teachers and SNAs and the ways in which students and staff members treat one another. This positive ethos permeates all the activities of the school and helps in forming a strong sense of social cohesion within the school.

Enable Ireland Sandymount School

Bullying

The Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools defines bullying 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

- 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.

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.

This anti-bullying policy will apply to all staff employed by the Board of Management, students and their families.

We recognise that for the vast majority of our students bullying is an abstract concept that is difficult to understand as it involves flexibility of imagination. Therefore our definition of what is perceived as bullying behaviour in Enable Ireland Sandymount School will take into account the following observable behaviour:

- a student persistently seeking to negatively influence the behaviour of another student – e.g. deliberately triggering behaviours to annoy a peer or seeking to get another students into trouble by provoking a negative response

- a student persistently targeting another student as a focus for negative behaviour during their own behavioural outburst

- a student repeatedly removing preferential reinforcers or chosen objects from another student on a routine basis to deliberately provoke or annoy them.

As all our students have diagnosed disabilities, we will promote acceptance of everyone within the school and use all opportunities to promote a tolerant school culture. We recognise that some of our students may have issues with certain peers due to sensitivity to loud noises that they may emit or their unpredictable behaviour. The school will seek as far as possible to take these issues into consideration in the formation of class groups with the known student cohort to avoid a situation where bullying may occur because of a clash of personality between two students. It may not be possible to predict these issues with new students transitioning into our school but staff will remain vigilant to the possibility of such behaviour occurring.

Incidents of bullying behaviour are not usual in Enable Ireland Sandymount School. However, we include the following as types of bullying behaviour that might occur amongst pupils in Enable Ireland Sandymount School:

- Physical

- Verbal

- Emotional/psychological

- Hitting

Enable Ireland Sandymount School

- Punching

- Spitting

- Damaging

- Throwing Objects

- Pinching

- Name calling

- Taunting

- Teasing

- Making Offensive remarks

- Ignoring

- Alienating

- Embarrassing someone

- Making fun of someone

- Excluding from groups

- Using Threatening Gestures

Note: Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including aggression towards a peer do not fall within the definition of bullying and will be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.

Impact of Bullying Behaviour

We recognise that students who are being bullied may present with any of the following indicators:

- Anxiety about travelling to / from school

- Unwillingness to go to school

- Deterioration in educational performance

- Pattern of physical illnesses

- Unexplained changes in either mood / behaviour

- Visible signs of anxiety / distress

- Possessions missing

- Out of character comments

- Increased requests for money

- Unexplained bruising

- Reluctance and / or refusal to say what is troubling him / her

Enable Ireland Sandymount School

Procedures for reporting and investigating incidents:

- All reports of bullying should be noted, investigated and dealt with by the class teacher so pupils will gain confidence in telling.

- Serious cases should be referred to the Principal and Deputy Principal.

- Parents should be informed of any incidents at the earliest opportunity.

- Students should be taught that reporting is not 'telling tales'.

- Individual teachers should record and take appropriate measures in accordance with this policy.

- SNAs and other staff are requested to report any incidents to class teacher. Discretion in reporting is important.

- All reports verbal and written will be investigated. All staff and pupils will be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour.

- The class teacher will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour by pupils, staff or parents. The teacher may wish to consult and get peer support from the Principal/Deputy Principal when dealing with an incident. The teacher will ascertain factual information using phrases such as what happened, where did it happen, when did it happen, who was involved, who witnessed, any other contextual information. The teacher will complete Template 3 of the Anti-Bullying procedures in a place away from the investigation.

- Parents are asked to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving the issues.

- Any interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all the personnel/pupils involved. Each person will be interviewed separately initially.

- If it is determined that someone has engaged in bullying behaviour then the Principal and Deputy Principal will be informed of the incident and they will work with the class teacher, support staff, parents, members of multidisciplinary team and pupils (if relevant) to implement a whole school approach to developing positive behaviour.

- The school will work with parents in developing ways they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and support their own behaviour.

Preventative Strategies – see also Code of Behaviour

- SPHE lessons on friendship, conflict resolution, personal safety, relationships and belongings

- SPHE lessons on valuing difference

- Stay Safe Programme

- Social Skills Programmes

- Zippys Friends Programme

- Focus and reinforcement of Positive Behaviour

- Fostering acceptance and tolerance of other pupils behaviours

Enable Ireland Sandymount School

- Positive visual campaign in all school areas focusing on being kind, helpful, respectful, honest, careful of others

- Social stories

- Vigilance on the part of every staff member in supervising pupils at all times

- Staff recognition that some pupils do not get on well with others and implement strategies to keep them apart without penalty

- Monitored access to Internet to prevent cyber-bullying.

- Staff members adhere to code of conduct

Programme of Support for Bullied Pupils

End of bullying behaviour

- A measure to change the school culture to foster more respect for this particular pupil and others
- A measure to ensure that the pupil is clear that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through an awareness raising programme and the speedy identification of those responsible and the resolution of the situation
- Encourage bullied pupil to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills
- Implement a 'buddy system' if applicable

For Pupils who have been found to have bullied

- Resolve the issue and pupils start again with a 'clean sheet'

- Assist these pupils to understand the behaviour and why it is not acceptable

- Give pupils tasks which give them a sense of responsibility and self esteem

- Whole school approach to positive behaviour strategies

Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils

We recognise that there are times and places where incidents may happen. Whole school strategies for the management of pupils during these times are discussed regularly see policy on risk assessments

Whole school activities are very difficult for some pupils and we allow them to attend events from the room next door with one to one support from staff. Areas such as the dining room and playground are carefully supervised and pupils are allowed into these areas at the discretion of the Teacher in charge.

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

enable ireland
Empower • Include • Enable
Action on Disability

Enable Ireland Sandymount School

specified i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

Cyber Bullying

Cyber bullying is the use of ICT (usually a mobile phone and or the internet) to abuse another person. It can take place anywhere and involve many people. Anybody can be targeted including pupils and school staff. It can include threats, intimidation, harassment, cyber-stalking, vilification, defamation, exclusion, peer rejection, impersonation, unauthorized publication of private information or images etc.

Procedures to prevent cyber bullying

- Staff, pupils, parents and Board of Management (BoM) will be made aware of issues surrounding cyber bullying through the use of appropriate awareness-raising exercises

- Staff will familiarise themselves with the School's Social Media Policy.

- Pupils will learn about cyber bullying through Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) and other curriculum projects

- Staff CPD (Continuous Professional Development) will assist in learning about current technologies

- Parents will be provided with information and advice on how to combat cyber bullying

- Staff, pupils and parents will be urged to report all incidents of cyber bullying to the school

- All reports of cyber bullying will be investigated

- The police will be contacted in cases of actual or suspected illegal content

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 (or where none exists, be otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the Patron and the Department of Education & Skills.

Signed: _____   Signed: _____

      (Chairperson of Board of Management)   (Principal)

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____

Enable Ireland Sandymount School