**Aglish National School. Roll No. 01395H**

(Under the Patronage of the Catholic Bishop of Waterford and Lismore)

**Aglish, Cappoquin, Co. Waterford. Phone No. (024-96425)**

**Website; www.aglishns.org E-mail; aglishns.ias@eircom.net**

**Anti-Bullying Policy of Aglish National School.**

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 Aglish 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 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;
* 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 and identity-based bullying including in particular, 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:

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 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 *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

4. The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:

Teacher in Classroom 1 (Junior & Senior Infants) Ms Veale

Teacher in Classroom 2 (1st Class) Ms Costin

Teacher in Classroom 3 (2nd & 3rd Class) Ms Mulcahy

Teacher in Classroom4 (4th, 5th & 6th Class) Mr Culloo

5. The education and prevention strategies that will be used by the school are as follows

The school believes that its pupils have the right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. The school also has a clear policy on the promotion of RESPECT for everybody where it is made clear that bullying is a form of anti-social behaviour. It is important therefore that the school has a clear, written policy to promote this belief, where pupils and parent(s)/guardians are fully aware that any bullying complaints will be dealt with firmly, fairly and promptly.

Bulling is repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against others. Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, although not condoned, cannot be described as bullying. However when the behaviour is systematic and ongoing it is bullying. Bullying affects everyone, not just the bullies and

the victims. It also affects those children who watch and less aggressive pupils can be drawn in by the group pressure. Bullying is not an inevitable part of school life or a necessary part of growing up and it rarely sorts itself out.

**Combating Bullying and the Action towards Prevention:**

**Role of Staff**

* The principal and staff exercise constant vigilance in the matter of misbehaviour. Our aim is to prevent misbehaviour rather than control. Positive behaviour is always recognised, affirmed and sought.
* Any complaints of bullying are dealt with quickly, firmly and fairly.
* The principal is informed of any instance of bullying.
* Awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour is addressed in the classroom, at school assemblies, through the school policy on pastoral care and other informal occasions when the opportunity arises.
* Pupils are taught skills and encouraged to report any incident of bullying.

**Advice for Pupils**

* Tell yourself that you do not deserve to be bullied, and that it is WRONG.
* Be proud of who you are. It is good to be individual.
* Try not to show that you are upset. It is hard but a bully thrives on someone’s fear.
* Stay with a group of friends/people. There is safety in numbers.
* Be assertive – shout NO. Walk away confidently. Go straight to a teacher or member of staff.
* Fighting back makes things worse– So don’t fight back. REPORT to a teacher or parent(s)/guardians instead. If you need support find a friend and both of you speak to the teacher.
* Generally it is best to tell an adult you trust straight away. You will get immediate support.

The teachers will take you seriously and will deal with bullies in a way which will end the bullying and will not make things worse for you.

IF YOU KNOW SOMEONE IS BEING BULLIED:

* TAKE ACTION – Watching and doing nothing looks as if you are on the side of the bully. It makes the victim feel more unhappy and on their own.
* If you feel you cannot get involved, tell an adult IMMEDIATELY. Teachers have ways of dealing with the bully without getting you into trouble.
* Do not be, or pretend to be, friends with a bully.

**Advice for Parents**

* Look for unusual behaviour in your children. For example, they may suddenly not wish to attend school, feel ill regularly, or not complete work to their normal standard, ask for money or begin stealing money.
* Always take an active role in your child’s education by enquiring how they are getting on.
* If you feel your child may be a victim of bullying behaviour, inform the school IMMEDIATELY. Your complaint will be taken seriously and appropriate action will follow.
* It is important to advise your child not to fight back. It can make matters worse.
* Tell your child there is nothing wrong with him/her. It is not her fault that they are being bullied.
* Make sure your child is fully aware of the School Policy concerning Bullying, and that they will not be afraid to ask for help;

**Aglish National School does not welcome bullies**

**SANCTIONS**

The use of sanctions is an important element in the school code. 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.

* Apology to the victim
* 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.

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

As well as the following criteria, your attention is also drawn to procedures as outlined in the school’s organisational policy booklet.

(i) The primary aim for the relevant teacher 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);

(ii) In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;

(iii) All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. 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;

(iv) Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers, cleaners will be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;

(v) Parents 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;

(vi) It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset;

(vii) Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents;

(viii) Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;

(ix) 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;

(x) 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;

(xi) 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;

(xii) Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face them from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher;

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

(xiv) In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents 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 parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils;

(xv) 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;

(xvi) It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school;

(xvii) Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved will 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. This can have a therapeutic effect;

(xviii) In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded by the relevant teacher in the recording template;

(xix) 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; and
* Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal;

(xx) 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, as appropriate, to the school’s complaints procedures;

(xxi) In the event that 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 to the Ombudsman for Children.

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

As well as the following criteria, your attention is also drawn to procedures as outlined in the school’s organisational policy booklet.

Culprits, victims, parents and teachers will be in constant contact. This will be facilitated by ongoing monitoring and regular back up information meetings with all concerned.

* A programme of support for pupils who have been bullied will be put in place. Sometimes such pupils may need counselling and/or opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed. This will be done on a case by case basis.
* A programme of support for those pupils involved in bullying behaviour will also be part of the school’s intervention process. Pupils involved in bullying behaviour need assistance on an ongoing basis. For those with low self-esteem, opportunities will be developed to increase feelings of self-worth. Learning strategies applied within the school will allow for the enhancement of the pupil’s self-worth. Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others. This will also be done on a case by case basis.
* Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour will be encouraged to discuss them with teachers

**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 Tuesday 3rd December 2013.

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: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_