**DONOUGHMORE NATIONAL SCHOOL**

**Policy**

**on**

**Bullying**

**Aims:**

1. To create a positive anti-bullying ethos that focuses on self-respect, self-discipline and mutual respect and consideration for all members of the school community.
2. To develop a school ethos, which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
3. To Raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents/guardians.
4. To develop procedures for investigating, reporting and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.
5. To provide parents with a clear understanding of the definition of bullying, the signs to look out for if suspicious that a child is being bullied and suggestions regarding what both, the victim of bullying and the bully can do.

**Definition:**

Bullying is **repeated aggression**, verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against another or others (DES guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour in Primary and Post-Primary Schools Section 2).

**Forms of Bullying:**

* Physical aggression: e.g. pushing, punching, pinching, shoving, tripping up, mess fights, etc.
* Damage to property e.g. school books, clothes, school furniture, etc.
* Extortion e.g. demands for money.
* Threats and Intimidation e.g. body language conveying dislike or aggression.
* Isolation e.g. deliberately isolating/excluding/ignoring a certain child.
* Name calling e.g. persistent name calling causing hurt, insult and humiliation.
* Personal Comments about appearance, clothing, personal hygiene or references to one’s family
* Cyber bullying. (See Cyber bullying policy).
* Identity based bullying – e.g. homophobic, racist.

**Preventive Measures:**

* Code of Behaviour
* An atmosphere of care, respect and consideration for others is promoted continuously in the school.
* Comprehensive supervision and monitoring measures through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation.
* All members of the school community to have a clear understanding of and input into the policy aims, content, preventative strategies and procedures for investigating and resolving bullying problems.
* Building self-esteem ~circle time; pupils rewarded for effort and improvement; positive expectations of pupil behaviour and performance.
* Positive school climate, which focuses on respect for the individual.
* Teachers to model tolerance and understanding, to embrace habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the interdependence of people in group and community.
* Identify aspects of the curriculum which positively influence pupil attitudes and values: English literature could stimulate discussion, co-operation and group enterprise through team sports and group work, SPHE Plan, Co-operative games, Walk Tall programme, Stay Safe, Health Promotion.
* Cyber bullying.

**Procedures for dealing with incidents of bullying:**

* All incidents will be noted, investigated and dealt with by the teachers. In that way pupils will gain confidence in ‘telling’. Pupils are encouraged to report incidents of bullying and told that they are not telling tales but are behaving responsibly. Telling to keep everyone safe is encouraged
* Teachers to take a calm unemotional problem-solving approach. Listen to both sides separately and try to resolve situation. If and when a solution is reached, record it, have it signed by both parties (age appropriate) and by teachers. Use reasoned argument to point out behavioural errors. It will be made clear that it is the behaviour and not the child, which is being rejected.
* Deal with incident according to the Code of Behaviour ~ pupil who has been engaged in bullying behaviour sanctioned as appropriate. Investigation to take place outside the classroom situation to avoid humiliation.
* Seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why?
* Investigation to be conducted with sensitivity and due regard to the rights of all the pupils involved. Calm manner adopted thus setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
* If a gang is involved, each member should be interviewed individually and then the gang should be met as a group. Each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone is clear about what everyone else has said. Written/pictorial, representations may be requested.
* If it is concluded 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 Code of Behaviour and Discipline and try to get him/her to see the situation from the victim’s point of view.
* Each member of the gang should be helped to handle the possible pressures that often face them from the other members after interview by the teacher. Each perpetrator will be helped to workout alternative behaviour and to understand the inappropriate behaviour.

**Support Guidelines/Procedures with victims, bullies and their piers:**

* Whole school/class lessons will be taught dealing with respect, self-esteem, the issue of bullying – both informally and through SPHE programme.
* Victims and/or bullies may be referred for counselling if necessary – providing them with opportunities without violating the rights of others – Victims and bullies may also need counselling and opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem and to develop their friendship and social skills.
* Victims/bullies may also be referred to outside agencies e.g. NEPS, Health Board, Gardaí (see DES child Protection Guidelines and Procedures p.20) and an IBP (Individual Behavioural Plan) may be devised by all relevant professionals.
* School to promote home/school community links to counter bullying behaviour.
* For cases of adult bullying the procedures as outlined in the INTO/Management Bodies publication “Working Together. Procedures and Policies for Positive Staff Relations” will be followed.
* Anti-bullying policy to be evaluated regularly – by regularly assessing the level and type of bullying behaviour that may be happening in the school. Amendments/action to be taken as a result of these findings.
* Monitor the behaviour of both the victim and bully to prevent further incidents of bullying.

**Advice for Parents:**

*(Refer to “Stop it! Steps to address Bullying – Wexford Education Network)*

* Be aware of signs that might indicate if a child is being bullied – unexplained bruising, anxious and afraid when going to or coming from school, school performance deteriorating, signs of regular interference with personal property, etc.
* Listen to your child. Get all the details – who, what, when, where, etc.
* Write down the details and check the information with your child.
* Remember there may be another side to the story.
* Ask them how they can deal with the situation
* Ask them how they want you to help.
* Speak directly to the class teacher.
* If the issue is not addressed and the bullying continues, speak to the Principal.
* If this is unsuccessful write to the BOM.

**General Principles:**

* Conflict resolution, based on respect for self and others is a skill that should be encouraged both at home and in the school. Children should be made aware that reporting a bullying incident is responsible behaviour. To copper fasten this idea, reports of bullying will be dealt with as soon as possible.
* Non-teaching staff are encouraged to report any incident of bullying behaviour witnessed by, or reported to them to the appropriate member of the teaching staff.
* In the event of a bullying complaint against a staff member, approach should normally be made to the staff member in question. If the matter is not resolved the Principal should be informed. If it is still unresolved, the Board of Management should be informed.
* It is not open to non-staff members to approach anyone other than the Principal or the relevant Staff member on school property regarding and alleged or proven bullying incident.
* Advice, support and help will be offered to both parties in a bullying incident.
* While teachers are naturally concerned with the overall behaviour of every child, this policy can only be invoked for bullying behaviour on school grounds and during school hours.

**Responsibility for implementation:**

The Board of Management, Principal, Teachers, Parents and other staff, will coordinate and monitor the implementation of this policy.

**Success criteria:**

The success of the policy will be evaluated by the feedback from teachers, parents and pupils and by the observation of behaviour in classrooms, corridors and yard.

**Implementation date:** By Board of Management 10th February 2005

**Timetable for review** – End of the school year 2005/06 and annually thereafter.

**Ratified:** 10th February 2005

**Reviewed and ratified: 5th October 2017**

**Reviewed and ratified: 14th December 2021**

**Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**