2020-21

**Anti-Bullying Policy**

**I. Rationale**

 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 Redeemer Girls’ 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 the Primary and Post-primary Schools which were published in September 2013, the school’s Code of Behaviour, and the Complaints Procedure for Parents and Grievance Procedure for Staff and Teaching Council’s Code of Conduct for Teachers.

**II.** **Key Principles**

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
  + explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and trans phobic 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.

**III. Definition of 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.

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 Traveler community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school’s Code of Behaviour.

**Phone use and Cyberbullying**

The school does not allow any phone use on the school grounds. Internet and computer use are covered under our Acceptable Use Policy. The school may become aware of isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging outside of school do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school’s code of behaviour where it affects school 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.  Parents will be made aware of external negative social media use, that may come under the remit of this policy or of which the school feels the parents should be informed.

Under the Covid-19 emergency the use of distance learning has increased the potential for school online platforms to be used for cyber bullying. Our updated AUP covers this eventuality and refers back to this policy.

**IV. Relevant Teachers**

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

        Class Teacher, Principal and Deputy Principal, The Kiva team.

**V. Education and Prevention Strategies**

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

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.

       Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.

      Catch pupils 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.

       A system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines will be implemented in all classes. These may include Student of the Month, Table Point System, and Golden Time.

       Explicitly teach senior pupils about the appropriate use of social media. This may be done with the assistance of external agencies.

       Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school policy on mobile phone and internet use. Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.

      Actively involve parents in awareness raising campaigns around social media.

      The Stay Safe and Walk Tall Programmes will be fully implemented in the school in line with the school’s SPHE policy with emphasis placed on building children’s self-esteem and social skills.

      An Anti-Bullying Awareness Week will be held annually. When appropriate, talks for parents on the topics of cyber bullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying will be arranged during this week.

      The playground will be divided into Junior (Junior Infants to Second Class) and Senior (Third Class to Sixth Class), Cairde will use both areas, Early Start, Junior.

       All staff will actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.

       Ensure there that there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.

In 2019 the whole staff undertook training in the Kiva Anti-bullying programme and and began implementing it in the 2019-20 year. It will continue into this year as well.

**VI. Procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying**

The class teacher will have primary responsibility for investigating alleged cases of bullying. However, in circumstances where the bullying is deemed to be of a serious nature, the Deputy Principal/ Principal will be informed and become involved in the investigation. The severity of the bullying will be assessed by the relevant staff.

1. 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).

2. In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgment to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.

3. All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. In this way pupils will gain confidence in ‘telling’.  It will 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.

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

5. 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.

6. Teachers will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.

7.  Incidents of bullying will be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved where the relevant teacher feels it is necessary

8.   All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned.

9. If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved will be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other’s statements.

10. Each member of a group will be supported through the possible pressures that they may face them from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher.

11. Where appropriate those involved will be asked to write down their account of the incident.

12. In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved will be contacted to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken. They will be given the opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce of support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils.

 13. It will be made clear to any pupil who has been engaged in bullying behaviour that she is in breach of the school’s anti-bullying policy and efforts will be made to get her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.

14. It will 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, her parents and the school.

15. If required, 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.

16. In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately resolved within 20 school days after it has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it will be recorded by the relevant teacher in the recording template.

17 .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.

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

**VII. Procedures for Recording bullying behaviour**

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

1. The class teacher will use his/her professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of all reports of alleged bullying, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.
2. If it is established by the class teacher that bullying has occurred, he/she will 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. A copy of these records will be given to the principal and stored in the child’ individual file.
3. The class teacher will use the recording template (Appendix 3 is available in Templates in Aladdin at attached to the child’s file) to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances an attach to student file on Aladdin.
4. If he/she feels that the bullying behaviour has not been resolved within 20 school days after it was established that bullying behaviour did occur.
5. If the bullying behaviour was deemed to be of a serious nature.

 A copy of the recording template will be kept by the class teacher and a copy provided to the Principal. All records kept will be subject the schools Data Protection Policy

**VIII. Bullying as part of a continuum of behaviour**

Bullying behaviour can be part of a continuum of behaviour rather than a stand-alone issue and in some cases behaviour may escalate beyond that which can be described as bullying to serious physical or sexual assault or harassment. In cases where the school has serious concerns in relation to managing the behaviour of a pupil the advice of the National Education Psychological Services will be sought.

In accordance with Children First and Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools, serious incidents of bullying behaviour will be referred to the Tusla and /or Gardaí as appropriate.

Where school personnel have concerns about a child and are not sure whether to report the matter to Tulsa, the Designated Liaison Person will seek advice from the Tusla Children and Family Social Services.

**IX. Supports for Pupils affected by bullying**

The school’s programme of support is as follows:

1. Kiva anti bullying programme is being introduced with the support of Genesis. When staff have used the programme fully then adjustments will be made to the procedures of this policy.
2. Close monitoring of pupils (those who have been bullied and those who engaged in bullying behaviour) in the classroom and at break times in the weeks following an incident of bullying.
3. Provide opportunities for children to participate in activities aimed at raising their self-esteem and resilience
4. Diary Time with a member of the School Completion Programme. This will offer a one to one support programme to children affected by bullying. It will focus on building their confidence and self-worth.
5. Diary Time will also be provided to children who have engaged in bullying behaviour to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.
6. **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.

**XI. 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 reasonable 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.

**XII.** This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**XIII.** 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

**XIV.** 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: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Reviewed and updated by Staff at Staff Meeting September 2nd 2019.

Reviewed September 2020 includes Covid/ distance learning update. BoM Review Oct 2020

Review included reference to the Kiva Programme being implemented during 2019-20