

## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY: PREVENTION AND ACTION

The aim of this document is to raise awareness of the fight against bullying throughout the LFI school community. It is about establishing a **common culture shared by** all with a view to preventing, and disciplining where necessary, behaviour that has an impact on everyone's wellbeing. School is a place for coexisting and learning essential values like **respect for** others and **tolerance**.

School is a place where pupils and staff should feel safe. It sees difference as an asset and strength, putting inclusion at the heart of its mission.

The LFI's school project for 2016-2020 includes a 'Living well together' strand, aimed at promoting a positive culture around the school's values.

### 1. PRINCIPLES

The whole of the educational community takes bullying very seriously. Its impact on a school is harmful to all parties.

All parties have an important role: management, teachers and non-teaching staff, the Board of Management, parents and children.

A **shared culture and a climate of confidence and awareness** should allow prevention of and action against bullying. A spirit of '**zero tolerance, zero taboo**' must govern these questions. Each situation will be dealt with taking into account the age of the children concerned.

#### A- A climate of increased confidence in school rests on:

##### a. A safe, protective environment and education in positive values

- Positive recognition of differences and the richness of diversity.
- The promotion of an inclusive school.
- An environment where children can feel safe to talk about events they have been victims of or witnesses to.
- Tolerance, respect and empathy among everyone. Develop a school culture around these essential values.
- Mutual understanding of what bullying is and the impact it can have.
- Putting in place preventative and educational actions (health education, civics education).

##### b. A professional culture of watchfulness and efficiency

- Effective supervision of the pupils.
- The example given by adults and their responsibility.
- Making resources available to staff, pupils and parents.
- Keeping a log of incidents.
- Investigating and following up incidents.
- Reviewing procedures.

#### B- Responsibilities

##### a. On the part of school staff

- Put in place preventative actions and events that promote a more peaceful school environment.
- Adhere to the principles that allow a climate of confidence
- Encourage the pupils in constructive resolution of conflicts (restorative practices)
- Report incidents using the forms provided and communicate with the designated adults.

**b. On the part of pupils**

- Respect other people and the premises.
- Show empathy, support, solidarity.
- Be able to identify behaviour that is inadmissible in school (physical or verbal violence, teasing etc...)
- Be able to report an incident to an adult in complete confidence

**c. On the part of parents**

- Support the school in putting in place the anti-bullying policy and the steps to improve the climate in school.
- Be aware of signs that their child may be being bullied.
- Speak to a teacher if they suspect a case of bullying.
- Work with the school to find positive solutions.
- Do not try to solve the problem alone.
- Make sure of reasonable use of the internet and social networks at home.

**d. On the part of the Board of Management**

As the managing body, the Board undertakes to support staff and management in putting in place the anti-bullying policy. It makes available the resources and necessary means to ensure a calm, healthy and safe environment for the pupils.

## **2. DEFINITION OF BULLYING**

Bullying is defined as **repeated** violence that can be verbal, physical or psychological. Repetition and duration make the bullying serious.

Bullying is based on the rejection of difference and the stigmatisation of certain characteristics. It takes various forms according to age and gender.

It can be considered that there is bullying when:

- attacks are repeated and go on for a long time
- attacks are intentional and intended to harm
- the relationship between the attacker or attackers and the victim is asymmetric, that is to say unbalanced. Bullying is inseparable from **developing a situation of domination**.

Bullying can take many forms, more or less visible: throwing things, pinching, pulling hair, mockery, nasty nicknames, insults, physical violence, robbery, dangerous games, exclusion, spreading rumours, extortion...

An occasional/isolated/non-intentional incident does not fall under the definition of bullying. It will however be treated in accordance with the Code of Behaviour.

## **3. CYBERBULLYING**

Posting an offensive message (image, video, text) on line or on social networks will be considered cyberbullying and treated in accordance with the procedure.

**Cyberbullying** is a recent type of bullying, relying on use of the internet and new communication technologies (texts, blogs, e-mails, social networks, mobile phones). This type of bullying is encouraged by anonymity and the lack of identity checks which allows the bullies to act in secret. It

takes the form of repeatedly receiving messages coming from different sources, containing threats, intimidation, insults or blackmail. The messages are sometimes accompanied by exclusion in school or other social situations.

#### **4. EDUCATION AND PREVENTION**

Preventing incidents through education and information on bullying for all is part of the school's principles.

It is necessary to be able to promote a responsible attitude and a safe environment for everyone. Putting in place an annual plan of action and making these actions long-term should allow such incidents to be limited.

Thus, prevention and education are achieved by the following means:

##### **Rules**

- A clear and accessible policy, understood by everyone and applied by everyone.
- The use of school programmes and moral and civil education to emphasise the essential principles of school life and the respect due to everyone. Example: A charter of good conduct to be drawn up in class.

##### **Vigilance**

- Promoting a climate of confidence between adults and pupils so that victims/witnesses will feel safe reporting what has happened: "If you don't talk about it, it won't stop." Breaking the silence. [STOP.STOP.TELL]
- For staff, being able to spot indicative behaviour: identify children who are isolated or deliberately excluded.
- The adult's duty to intervene.
- Making sure there is effective supervision: identify the sensitive times or places.

##### **Actions**

- Including specific times in the school calendar: safe internet day, anti-bullying week.
- Appropriate workshops to inform the whole school community (children/staff/parents): being able to identify a bullying situation e.g. Sticks and Stones, staysafe.
- Informing pupils about using social networks and the internet.
- Putting up signs and visible indications on the premises: "SAFE SPACE".
- Having mentors and buddies as positive links with the younger pupils. (Fourth Year and 6<sup>th</sup> class/Clonskeagh-Foxrock liaison/CM2s' reading time with the younger ones)

#### **5. PROCEDURE IN THE CASE OF AN INCIDENT**

The adults involved in establishing and verifying the facts are: teachers, supervisory staff, the school counsellor in the secondary school, management.

Disciplinary measures are taken by management in accordance with the Code of Behaviour.

##### **5.1 Principles**

Pupils' parents must cooperate in investigating incidents and participate, as far as possible, in restoring a peaceful relationship between the parties concerned.

- The investigation does not take place in class.
- The investigation of an incident should allow it to be established whether supportive or disciplinary measures are appropriate.

- Interviews with pupils will be conducted taking account of their age and sensitivities. Initially, these interviews will be individual.
- The pupils involved, including witnesses, will be heard. When their age allows it, a written account will be requested.
- All interviews will give rise to written minutes.
- Parents will be informed (telephone and e-mail); parents of children in the primary school may be asked to attend interviews.
- Parents will be informed of the procedure and kept up to date as events unfold. Their participation is important: to prevent incidents reoccurring/to back up any action taken/to help to support their children.
- If it appears productive and relevant, a meeting between the parties concerned can be organised.

## **5.2 Reporting**

All members of staff are responsible for bringing any incidents they witness to the attention of the school principal or management. Reporting can be done by different means depending on the situation:

- The offended pupil confides in:
  - another pupil: the adult who has been informed talks to the pupil who has been told and accompanies her or him to the principal, the headmaster or the designated adult to meet together the pupil who is the victim.
  - a member of the teaching staff: the adult talks to the victim and accompanies her or him to the principal, the headmaster or the designated adult.
  - her or his parents: the parents inform the class teacher and are listened to and referred to the principal, the headmaster or the designated adult.
- A pupil (who has been confided in or has been a witness) or an adult (staff or parent) knows of a bullying situation in the school: she or he is referred to the principal, the headmaster or the designated adult.

## **5.3 Investigation**

The procedure set out below may change in accordance with the situation and the age of the children concerned:

- Procedure with regard to the offended/injured pupil

The principal and/or the headmaster together with a teacher or the school counsellor take a statement:

- Nature of the events, those responsible, where, start and frequency of events,
  - Witnesses?
  - How does the pupil interpret these events?
  - Was she/he able to react in self-defence: talk about it (at school, at home, with friends), react verbally or physically, run away. If not, why?
  - What are the effects, consequences?
- 
- Procedure with regard to witnesses

The principal and/or the headmaster accompanied by a teacher or the school counsellor hear the witnesses individually.

They describe the situation the offended child is the victim of and interview witnesses in a confidential way: description of the facts, their reactions or non-reactions, the reasons, their share of possible responsibility, the proposals to resolve the situation.

**It is appropriate to emphasise the educational dimension of these interviews.**

- Interviewing the pupil presumed to be responsible

The principal, the headmaster or the designated adult inform the pupil that we are looking into a possible bullying situation. The supposed bully is asked for his or her version of the facts. According to the degree to which the facts are recognised, it is essential to recall the rules of living together and the consequences of bullying.

Depending on the nature and seriousness of the bullying, the principal and/or the headmaster will inform the pupil of what may happen in terms of discipline or punishment, and ask him or her to suggest how to make reparation.

In the case of a denial, additional information should be sought in order to clarify the situation.

If a number of pupils are involved, they should be interviewed separately in accordance with the same protocol.

**It is important that these interviews take place in a climate of confidence and serenity, of seeking a solution. The pupils' rights must be respected.**

- Meeting the parents

The principal and/or the headmaster and the designated adult will meet or contact the parents of the offended child. They will be listened to, supported and reassured that their child will be protected. They are included in how the situation is dealt with and informed of their rights. The protective role of the school will be emphasised, as will the participation in this role of everyone concerned.

The principal or the headmaster can meet the parents of pupils who are witnesses. Whether they are active or passive witnesses, these pupils play an essential role. Meeting and maintaining a dialogue with their parents is therefore important for resolving the problem if they played an active role, but also if they allowed things to happen through inaction.

A meeting is arranged with the parents of the pupil or pupils responsible during which they are informed of the situation. They will be reminded of the consequences of the acts committed and the type of measures that may be taken against their child. They may be asked their opinion of the reparation measures proposed. Their participation may be useful to resolve the situation.

School staff who are involved in investigating the bullying incident must be able to work with confidence and impartiality, without being put under pressure. LFI has adopted the Dignity at Work Charter.

## **6. FOLLOW-UP AND SUPPORT**

Investigating the incident allows its seriousness to be evaluated and instigate, if necessary:

- Measures of reparation and/or support.
- An obligation to meet the school counsellor/designated adult.

- Disciplinary action, as set out in the Code of Behaviour: ranging from a verbal warning to expulsion following a disciplinary council meeting (secondary school).
- A weekly report on the behaviour of the pupils involved in the incident will be made by the school counsellor and the principal (secondary school), the class teacher and the headmaster (primary school) during three weeks.
- The parents are kept informed of the development of the situation, including meetings if necessary.

The educational dimension should always be prioritised in dealing with these incidents. Hence the support given to the pupils and their families, **whether they are bullies or bullied**, can take the following forms:

- Recommendations for external help.
- A meeting outlining steps taken with the designated adults of the school: teachers, management, school counsellor, year head.
- Putting in place a restorative approach if appropriate.
- Mediation.
- Encouraging positive attitudes and restoring self-confidence.
- Emphasising positive, empathetic and resilient behaviour.

The procedure ends when:

- The bullying actions between the pupils concerned have stopped.
- The problems between the parties concerned have been resolved, insofar as possible.
- Serenity has returned and relations are peaceful.

<p><b>Actions undertaken must be long-term and the rules and values of the school must be constantly recalled during the school year.</b></p>
---

## **7. RECORD AND REVIEW OF PROCEDURES**

The school will maintain a record of disciplinary measures and punishments and put in place a system to record bullying incidents.

A reprise of the subject will be presented at the Primary School Council and the School Council. Moreover, the school management makes a monthly report on school life to the Board of Management.

This protocol is approved by the Primary School Council, the School Council and the Board of Management. It appears on the website and is sent to all members of staff.

**ANNEX 1: Follow-up after putting the protocol in place**

The Primary School Council, the School Council and the Board of Management must review the protocol and its application each year. An analysis using the follow-up sheet below will allow evaluation and amendment if necessary.

	Yes/ No
Has the protocol been adopted by the school bodies?	
Has the protocol been uploaded to the website? Has it been sent to the parents?	
Has it been made available to all staff?	
Does management feel that the staff is sufficiently informed of the protocol to apply it effectively?	
Has the protocol been communicated to the pupils?	
Does the protocol contain preventative and educational measures?	
Have all preventative and educational measures been put in place?	
Has the efficacy of these measures been measured?	
Is management satisfied with how incidents are reported and dealt with?	
Does the principal make an annual report on the subject?	
Have management and/or the Board of Management received complaints of bullying from parents?	
Have parents left the school citing bad handling of bullying as the reason?	
Has the Ombudsman for Children been appraised of questions concerning bullying in the school?	
Have reported cases been analysed to allow tendencies to be identified?	
Has management identified criteria to assess progress on the question of handling bullying?	
Has a plan of action been put in place?	

Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
Provisieur

Date \_\_\_\_\_

---

**FORM – REPORT OF AN INCIDENT OF BULLYING**

**1: NAME and CLASS of the bullied pupil**

**NAME:**

**CLASS:**

**2: NAMES and CLASSES of children involved in the incident**


**3: Source of the information**

**4: Where the incident took place**

<b>Pupil concerned</b>		<b>Yard</b>	
<b>Another pupil</b>		<b>Classroom</b>	
<b>Parent</b>		<b>Corridor</b>	
<b>Teacher</b>		<b>Toilets</b>	
<b>Other</b>		<b>On the way to or from school</b>	
		<b>Social network</b>	

**5: Names of those who reported the facts**

--

**6 : Type of bullying**

<b>Physical aggression</b>		<b>Cyber-bullying</b>	
<b>Theft or destruction of property</b>		<b>Intimidation</b>	
<b>Isolation/Exclusion</b>		<b>Rumours</b>	
<b>Insults</b>		<b>Other</b>	

**7: If the bullying involved discrimination, please specify:**

<b>Homophobia</b>	<b>Disability</b>	<b>Racism</b>	<b>Religion</b>	<b>Other</b>



**8: Description of the attitude of the presumed bully**

**9: Actions put in place**

**Signature:**

**NAME:**

**Date:**

**RESSOURCES**

In French

<http://www.agircontreharcelementalecole.gouv.fr/>  
<http://www.nonaharcelement.education.gouv.fr/>  
<http://www.nonaharcelement.education.gouv.fr/ressources/guides>  
<http://www.respectzone.org/fr/>

In English

[www.staysafe.ie](http://www.staysafe.ie)  
[www.sticksandstones.ie](http://www.sticksandstones.ie)  
[www.childline.ie](http://www.childline.ie)  
[www.dublinsamaritans.ie](http://www.dublinsamaritans.ie)  
[www.watchyourspace.ie](http://www.watchyourspace.ie)  
<https://www.webwise.ie/teachers/resources/>  
[www.npc.ie](http://www.npc.ie)