

East Glendalough School

Anti-Bullying Policy

“So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you” [Matthew 7:12]

1 Preamble

East Glendalough School aims to encourage each student to develop his or her full potential, to mature as an individual and to become a constructive and caring member of society.

The School aims to create and maintain a happy and caring climate that encourages and rewards students to respect the feelings of others. This is reflected in our School Code which is displayed in all classrooms throughout the school. We try to develop an understanding among our students that unkind actions and remarks are completely unacceptable, even if they are not intended to hurt. We ask our students not to tolerate bullying behaviour and we emphasise that it is the responsibility of everyone, and not just the victim, to report it.

The underlying principle here is that of kindness. East Glendalough School emphasises and encourages politeness, courtesy, co-operation, good manners and respect for others and their property as fundamental principles of behaviour. This is a clear part of the ethos of EGS and is stated in unambiguous terms in the Code of Conduct.¹ Acceptance of a place in EGS is taken as acceptance of this ethos.²

Every student has the right to enjoy learning and leisure time in school in a safe and secure environment. Bullying and intimidation of others is completely unacceptable.

2. Department of Education Legal Requirements

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 East Glendalough School has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school’s overall Code of Conduct. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* which were published in September 2013.

The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of students 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 students 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;

1 Refer to the School Code of Conduct and Ethos Statement, available at www.egs.ie

2 For examples of how this ethos is communicated, please refer to Appendix 1.

- 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 students; and
 - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- In as much as is feasibly possible, supervision and monitoring of students;
- 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 Definition

East Glendalough School endorses the definition of bullying published by the Department of Education and in the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*:

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-bullying³
- Identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying⁴, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's religion or 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.

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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.

4 Basic Principles and Considerations

4.1 Every case of bullying is unique and often complex.

³ Cyberbullying can be defined as the use of Information and Communication Technology to deliberately upset someone. There are a number of forms of cyberbullying, which can include threats and intimidation; harassment or cyber-stalking (e.g. repeatedly sending unwanted texts or unwanted messages); vilification/defamation; exclusion or peer rejection; impersonation; unauthorised publication of private information or images. In cyberbullying, bystanders can easily become perpetrators - by passing on or showing to other images designed to humiliate or by taking part in online polls or discussion groups.

⁴ Homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying or LGBTQ+ based bullying 'is bullying based on prejudice or discrimination because of someone's actual or perceived sexuality or gender' (Being LGBTQ+ in School' Resource, GLEN/DES, 2016).

- 4.2 EGS reserves the right, at all times, to protect all the students and staff in its care from bullying behaviour.
- 4.3 Parents/guardians should inform the Form Teacher of incidents which they suspect to be bullying or which have come to their attention indirectly through their children or other parents/guardians. Instances of bullying or alleged bullying behaviour can only be dealt with/investigated when this information is brought to the School.
- 4.4 Investigations of allegations of bullying can take a considerable amount of time.
- 4.5 Investigations and resolutions of bullying behaviour must follow the process detailed in Section 7 of this policy.

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. For parents of both victims of bullying and those suspected of bullying such issues can be extremely distressing, so it is important to emphasise that

- teachers take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach
- witness evidence is used to determine the truest possible picture of what has happened
- students accused of bullying are treated fairly
- the principles of natural justice must apply.

5 Examples of Bullying Behaviour

The following are examples of behaviour which might be considered an act of bullying, but it is not an exhaustive list:

- Physical contact
- Threatening abuse
- Humiliation
- Harassment (including repeated demands for money)
- Intimidation (including aggressive body language and gestures)
- Verbal abuse (including name calling)
- Spreading of rumours
- Obscene or aggressive language
- Deliberate exclusion or isolation
- Victimisation
- Offensive jokes
- Inappropriate comments related to, but not exclusive to, gender, disability, sexual orientation, race and creed.
- Intrusion through interference with personal property or belongings
- Negative peer pressure or unwanted pressure
- Unauthorised photography, audio and/or video recording
- Damage of property
- Cyberbullying, which takes many forms.

The above behaviour can be evident directly in person-to-person contact or indirectly through technology and electronic media (e.g. device, phone, internet, social media).

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

6 Education and Prevention Strategies

The education and prevention strategies that are used in the School to discourage all types of bullying are outlined in this document as Appendix 1: “Examples of how the School Ethos regarding Bullying is communicated” and Appendix 2: “Examples of Subject Areas with Anti-Bullying Content”.

7. Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Allegations of Bullying in the School

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:

7.1 All reports of bullying should be made primarily to the Form Teacher, but may also be made to any teacher, any member of staff, a prefect or a senior student. Non-teaching staff and SNAs will be encouraged to report inappropriate behaviour to the relevant member of staff.

- 7.2 The Form Teacher, Year Head or Deputy Principal will investigate the initial report. In accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*, this staff member will be referred to as the “relevant teacher”.
- 7.3 Those allegedly involved will be interviewed and may be asked for a written account of the alleged incident.
- 7.4 The victim of the alleged bullying will be interviewed and assured that he/she is entitled to a school environment free of any bullying and will be encouraged to report any further incidents if they should occur. This may be by direct student-teacher communication or through a parent/guardian. This may also involve keeping a 'diary' or written record of further incidents.

If it is judged that bullying has occurred:

- 7.5 The investigating teacher will inform the Year Head, Deputy Principal and/or Principal as appropriate. The Principal will only be involved after the initial investigation has been completed.
- 7.6 Where bullying behaviour is determined, the perpetrator(s) will be informed that their behaviour is a serious breach of the Code of Conduct. They may be required to re-affirm their commitment to the School's Code of Conduct. They will be encouraged to recognise the inappropriateness of such behaviour and its impact on others. Initial incidents of bullying may be dealt with using a restorative approach.
- 7.7 The parents of the bully will be informed and/or invited to an interview in the school.
- 7.8 The parents of the victim will also be informed and may be offered further help from the school.
- 7.9 Following investigation and consideration, sanctions may be imposed in line with the School's discipline procedures.
- 7.10 Where bullying behaviour is determined to be of a grave nature, additional procedures may take place.
- 7.11 Counselling may be offered to both the bully and the victim, as deemed necessary.

Where persistent or serious bullying occurs:

- 7.12 Parents/guardians may be invited to an interview with the Deputy Principal or Principal. In such cases parents/guardians will be reminded of the content of this policy.
- 7.13 Reference may be made to Sections 8.4 and 8.5 of the Code of Conduct:
8.4 *Serious misdemeanours and repeated offences can be referred to the Principal and to the Board of Management*
8.5 *Where a pupil's conduct warrants it, the Principal has authority to suspend a pupil. The Board of Management reserves the right to confirm suspension and to cancel enrolment.*
- 7.14 Reference may be made to the Admissions Policy:
The Board of Management reserves the right to exclude any student who puts the health and welfare of other students or staff at risk, or any student who engages in persistent or serious misbehaviour which undermines the ethos of the school or undermines the education of other students.
- 7.15 In accordance with *Children First (2017)* and the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2017)*, serious instances of bullying may be referred to TUSLA, the Child and Family Agency or the Gardai as appropriate. In consultation with these agencies an additional response may be required.

Where a parent is not satisfied that the School has dealt with a bullying case appropriately, the parents shall be referred to the School's complaints procedures. In the event that a parent has exhausted these procedures and is still not satisfied, the School will advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

8. Counselling and Ongoing Support

The School's programme of support for students affected by bullying is as follows:

- A programme of support for students who have been bullied may be put in place. Many students will be able to continue their lives without any support at all, but some may need counselling and/or opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills or to build resilience whenever this is needed.
- A programme of ongoing support for those students involved in bullying behaviour may also be part of the School's intervention process. Students who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others, or they may need activities to help them develop coping skills, maturity or increase feelings of self-worth.
- Students who observe incidents of bullying behaviour will also receive ongoing support if required.
- It should be noted, however, that there is a limit to personal counselling that can be offered within a school context and it is not school policy to offer a programme of on-going counselling regarding issues which are outside the skills or time constraints of the Guidance Counsellor. Sometimes it may be necessary to recommend that students seek/attend further, outside help.

9 Procedures for Recording and Reporting Bullying Behaviour

All records of bullying behaviour shall be maintained in accordance with data protection legislation⁵ and the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

- 9.1 While all reports, including anonymous reports, of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the teacher will use his/her professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved.
- 9.2 If it is established that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher shall 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.
- 9.3 The relevant teacher will use the Recording Template in Appendix 3 to record the bullying behaviour in cases where he/she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred.
- 9.4 Where it is established that bullying behaviour has occurred, the relevant teacher shall report this to the Principal or Deputy Principal.
- 9.5 Every regular meeting of the Board of Management shall include bullying as an agenda item. The Principal or Deputy Principal shall report on any instances of bullying that have been reported as well as the interventions and/or sanctions by the School (the students involved shall not be identified).
- 9.6 The implementation and effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy shall also be frequently included as an agenda item for staff meetings to ensure that concerns about the policy, or the welfare of individual students, can be shared effectively and addressed.

10. Bullying of Staff

Complaints of bullying or harassment of staff will be dealt with according to the Code of Practice agreed between the ACCS, ASTI, TUI and Impact along with Dignity at Work and Grievance Procedures and in accordance with current law.

11. Supervision and Monitoring of Students

It simply isn't possible to supervise every student interaction in every area of the School. However, subject to the resources provided by the Department of Education, the Board of Management endeavours to ensure that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place both to prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible. Areas which are identified as in need of particular supervision at a given time will be addressed. An annual review of the School's Child Safeguarding Risk Assessment also informs this.

12. 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 students or staff or the harassment of students or staff on any of the nine grounds

⁵ See also the *East Glendalough School Data Protection Policy*.

specified i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community⁶.

13. Adoption and Distribution of this policy

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on the date below and made available to school personnel, published on the school website and is readily accessible to parents and students on request. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and the Patron if requested.

14. Review

The effectiveness of this Anti-Bullying Policy shall be the subject of continuous review in the light of incidents of bullying behaviour encountered. The Board of Management shall make provision for periodic examination of the prevention and intervention strategies in place and will undertake an periodic review of this policy and its implementation in accordance with the terms of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*. East Glendalough School personnel, the Parents' Association Committee and the Student Council will be involved in this process. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the Patron and the Department of Education.

⁶ See also the *East Glendalough School Sexual Harassment Policy*.

Teachers and staff are committed to creating and maintaining an atmosphere in the school in which bullying is not tolerated.

- All parents are sent a copy of the school Code of Conduct to be signed as accepted by all students and parents.
- All 1st year students and new entrants are informed in their first month in the school that EGS does not tolerate bullying and will be pro-active in identifying bullying behaviour.
- The East Glendalough School “School Code” is displayed throughout the school.
- Bullying is dealt with in several subject areas, i.e. SPHE, CSPE, Religious Education and English (See Appendix 2)
- An Anti-bullying module is generally run in 1st year.
In recent years, this has included a Drama Presentation by the *Sticks & Stones* Drama Workshop. These have aimed to heighten awareness of bullying in all its guises, revealing the misery it inflicts and helping to break the silence that ensures its continuance.
- The use of an *eSafety* seminar has also had significant benefit.
- Reference is frequently made at morning assembly to the rights and responsibilities of all at school to feel secure and more generally to the school ethos. An emphasis that our community is made of upstanders, not bystanders, is a regular feature, along with descriptions of how interventions can be started.
- The Buddy System in which every prefect is assigned to a group of 4-6 First Year students from their very first day, when they lead them on a Treasure Hunt around the school. This means that every First Year student knows a senior student in whom they can confide. They are encouraged to report any problems, including bullying, to their prefect.
- Anonymous surveys regarding bullying frequently take place for yeargroups throughout the School. These can happen in Registration with the Form Teacher, in SPHE class, or in meetings with the Junior School Head. Sometimes these surveys may ask for information about a specific problem, and on other occasions they may be more open-ended – “Something that needs to be said”.
- Postal surveys or online surveys – to heighten the sense of anonymity – may be undertaken if the School has grounds to believe there is a specific problem.
- The Year Heads and Form Teachers get to know every student throughout their time in the school and frequently emphasise the importance of letting them know if there is a problem – for them or for others in the class.

As well as the Code of Conduct, the following School Code is published in classrooms around the school.

Our School Code

1. Every student has the right to enjoy learning and leisure time in school.
2. Unkind actions or remarks are unacceptable, even if these were not meant to hurt.
3. The use of the phrase “I was only messing” is not permitted in this school.
4. We must ask for help if we need it, or when we know someone else has a problem.
5. Listen and learn from the views of others.
6. Respect property. Your property, other people’s property and the property of the school.
7. We are all responsible for our school environment.

In East Glendalough School, emphasis is placed on politeness, good manners, courtesy, co-operation and respect for others and their property.

East Glendalough School does not tolerate bullying or intimidation of any kind. Bullies rely on our silence. It is important that bullying behaviour is reported at all times. East Glendalough School is both a “telling” and a “listening” school.

S.P.H.E. (Social, Personal and Health Education)

In Form 1, there is a bullying module completed with students over a period of 5-6 weeks in the first term. This is usually complemented by a drama presentation, such as the *Sticks and Stones* workshop, which is followed up in class – often with worksheets provided by the drama company.

In Form 2 and Form 3, the whole ethos of the class is based on the importance of respecting yourself and each other. A contract is signed by all members of the class which highlights this ethos. There are two specific classes that focus on the issue of bullying. However, bullying is also dealt with under many guises, such as peer pressure, people's differences, things that can be perceived as bullying and what is actually bullying, internet use, etc.

Senior Cycle – RSE and Guidance

Senior Cycle RSE/Tutorial classes regularly cover interpersonal relationships and their management. Where necessary and identified by Pastoral Care teams or Management, targeted interventions can be made in these classes.

C.S.P.E. (Civic, Social and Political Education)

There is a module on bullying, which is usually covered at the end of Form 1 or at the beginning of Form 2. This class, often taken by the Chaplain, has a strong emphasis that mature students have learned to live with each other, and that it is their responsibility as citizens to look out for everyone else in their class.

English Department

The topic of bullying arises in a variety of ways during English classes, such as poetry, fiction, film and drama. When it arises, teachers use the opportunity to discuss the different forms bullying can take and the impact it can have on both the perpetrator and the victim. The Department endeavours to foster an atmosphere where students feel comfortable to speak about the issues. The School's Anti-Bullying message is reinforced, and everyone is encouraged to respect and look out for everyone else.

Appendix 3 Template for recording bullying behaviour

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name _____ Class _____

2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

3. Source of bullying concern/report

4. Location of incidents

5. Name of person reporting the bullying concern

6. Nature/type of Bullying Behaviour

7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

9. Details of actions taken

Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date _____

Appendix 4

Education and prevention strategies to combat bullying based on Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

1. The School makes it clear to all members of the school community that bullying of any kind is unacceptable, irrespective of whether it is a student, a staff member or any other person that is the subject of such behaviour.
2. When investigating and dealing with bullying the principal focus is on resolving differences and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved, rather than apportioning blame.
3. Students are provided, through both their curricular and extra-curricular programmes, with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth/self-respect.
4. The focus of the School's prevention strategy is to build empathy, respect and resilience in students.
5. Students are provided with opportunities to understand the causes and effects of bullying, the issue of identity-based bullying and in particular homophobic and trans-phobic bullying. This will include the display for LGBTQ+ posters and discussions with parents about statements of welcome and respect for LGBTQ+ members of the school community, teaching the Social, Personal, Health Education (SPHE) resource, *Growing Up LGBTQ+* and participating in LGBTQ+ awareness events as well as support for the School's OMG (Open Minded Group).
 - a. The School recognises that the SPHE curriculum makes specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the inter-related areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships. Also, that the Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) programme provides opportunities to explore and discuss areas such as human sexuality and relationships, which has particular relevance to identity-based bullying. The School will make every reasonable effort to ensure that the full potential of these programmes to combat bullying is exploited.
 - b. The School is committed to welcoming diversity of all kinds and addresses these issues effectively in the interests of all members of the school community.
 - c. Within the teaching of all subjects, and within extracurricular activities, staff endeavour to foster an attitude of respect for all: to promote the value of diversity; to address prejudice and stereotyping and to highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
6. Prevention and awareness-raising measures also deal explicitly with cyber-bullying through educating students about appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while on-line and also through developing a culture of reporting any concerns about or incidents of bullying to a member of the teaching staff.
7. In all its communications with students and their parents, commencing with the induction of the students in the School, the School makes every effort to highlight the importance of students reporting incidents of or concerns about bullying to a member of the teaching staff.
8. The School has adopted a school-wide approach (involving management, staff, parents, students and members of the wider community with a connection to the School) to prevent and combat

bullying. The School is committed to engaging with parents through involving them in the development of policies and practices to combat bullying as well as holding information evenings for parents to ensure that they understand the way the School deals with bullying, and to provide them with reliable information on how they may contribute towards combating bullying.

9. The School takes particular account of the needs of pupils with disabilities or with SEN. This involves supporting inclusion, focusing on developing social skills, paying particular attention to student induction and cultivating a school culture that respects everyone and values helping one another.

10. The School regularly surveys students to identify instances of bullying, their extent and, in so far as is possible, the students who may be affected by it.

11. The School fulfils its responsibilities by providing full RSE and SPHE programmes, which specifically address the issue of bullying with each year group.

12. The School will place procedures for reporting bullying visibly throughout the School building.

13. The School promotes Kindness wherever possible, and presents an annual award for kindness shown to others.

14. The School devotes time at regular staff meetings towards raising the awareness of bullying among staff, building an understanding of what bullying is and providing guidance on how it is best combatted – prevention, detection, investigation, documentation (as appropriate) and resolution. Staff meetings also provide opportunities for exploring the potential that exists within the teaching of all subjects and within extracurricular activities to foster an attitude of respect for all, to promote the value of diversity, to address prejudice and stereotyping, and to highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.