

ERSS Anti-Bullying Policy, September 2024:

School Name: Edmund Rice Secondary School, Carrick-on-Suir.

School Address: Mount St. Nicholas, Carrick-on-Suir, Co. Tipperary.

School Details: ERSS Carrick-on-Suir is a Voluntary Roman Catholic Secondary School under the trusteeship and the patronage of the Edmund Rice Schools Trust. The School is grant aided by the Department of Education & Skills and is a single sex (boys) school.

School Management: The Board of Management of ERSS Carrick-on-Suir is a statutory Board appointed pursuant to the provisions of the Education Act 1998.

Mission Statement:

Inspired by its founder, ERSS Carrick-on-Suir's mission is to *"To provide a caring Christian community which celebrates effort and talent in an environment of hope and happiness"*, with a vision to *"Learn together, succeed together in a respectful environment."*

Ethos:

As an Edmund Rice School ERSS Carrick-on-Suir seeks to promote the five key elements of an Edmund Rice School as espoused by the ERST Charter:

- Nurturing faith, Christian spirituality and Gospel-based values
- Promoting partnership in the school community
- Excelling in teaching and learning
- Creating a caring school community
- Inspiring transformational leadership

Please Note:

Personal data collected about prospective students/students and their parents/guardians will be retained and used strictly in accordance with the provisions of GDPR legislation as introduced 25th. May 2018. Further details on data protection are set out in the school's Data Protection Policy.

Content

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the Code of Behaviour guidelines issued by Túsla (formerly the NEWB), the Board of Management of ERSS Carrick-on-Suir 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 (Dept of Education, 2013).

This policy must be read in conjunction with the ERSS Carrick-on-Suir's Code of Behaviour, Child Protection Policy, Internet Acceptable Usage Policy, Health and Safety Statement, Dignity in the Workplace Policy and other relevant policies.

2. The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives and wellbeing of students and staff 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 - supports the wellbeing of all members of 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 students - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
 - Effective supervision and monitoring of students
 - Supports for staff.
 - Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies)
 - 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: (Dept of Education, 2013)

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.

In accordance with the Cinealtás Action Plan on Bullying the core definition of bullying is:

Bullying is targeted behaviour, online or offline that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and /or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power on relationships between two people or group of people in society.

As per the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (Dept. of Education 2013) 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 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 ERSS Carrick-on-Suir'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 schools' 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. (See Appendix 4)

3.1 Cyber Bullying

Social media technologies are defined as information and communication technologies (ICT) such as the internet, digital media, mobile phone etc.

Cyber bullying means any use of social media technologies (e.g. text messages, group messaging services, instant messaging, personal websites, online personal polling websites, social media networks etc.) that seeks to undermine or humiliate a member/member of the

ERSS Carrick-on-Suir school community. This includes circulating or publishing through ICT, material recorded without consent for the purpose of undermining/damaging the professional/personal reputation of another person.

This policy also applies when a student engages in inappropriate use of social media, when not under the direct supervision of the school, where there is a clear connection to ERSS Carrick-on-Suir and/or a demonstrable impact on its aims, work, reputation and/or personnel.

Responsibilities of Users of IT Devices (Phones, Computers, Laptops, Cameras, etc.)

1. Keep password secret and protect account access
2. Do not post sensitive information publicly
3. Do not retaliate to any incident. Seek support and advice rather than engaging with the perpetrator.
4. Report any incident to the ERSS Carrick-on-Suir authorities in a timely manner
5. Retain any evidence of an incident – including text, emails, voice mail, website or instant message. Do not delete texts or emails. Screen prints should be taken of messages or webpages and care should be taken to record the time, date and address of the site.
6. The Teaching Council's Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers (June 2012) states that "Staff should ensure that any communication with students, colleagues, parents, school management and other is appropriate, including communication via electronic media, such as e-mail, texting and social networking sites."

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows: (see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):

- a. Principal
- b. Deputy Principal
- c. Year Heads
- d. Another teacher should the situation warrant it – e.g. on school trips.

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber- bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by ERSS are as follows: (Dept. of Education, 2013, p. 25)

- A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the ERSS Carrick-on-Suir community.
- The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping and highlighting the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.

- The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all of our students through both curricular and extra-curricular activities. Students will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.
- Whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develop an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on students' lives and the need to respond to it – prevention and intervention.
- Professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teachers and Year Heads.
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include students, parents/guardians and the wider school community.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extracurricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within ERSS Carrick-on-Suir.
- Involvement of the student council in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. student mentoring system, mentoring, Lunchtime Pals and other student support activities that can help to support students and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for ERSS Carrick-on-Suir to be included in student journals and displayed publicly on the Student Council noticeboard. It will include the names of the relevant teachers responsible for investigating allegations of bullying.
- The ERSS Carrick-on-Suir Anti-Bullying Policy is discussed with students and all parents/guardians are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of ERSS Carrick-on-Suir.
- The implementation of regular whole school awareness measures e.g. a dedicated period once per term with a focus on bullying prevention strategies.
- Encouragement of a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way students will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all students that when they report incidents of bullying, they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
- Ensuring that students know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.:
 - Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class
 - Hand note up with homework

- Make a phone call to the school or to a trusted teacher in the school - Get a parent/guardian or friend to tell on your behalf

- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.

- Ensuring the full implementation of the SPHE and CSPE curricula and the RSE programme.

- See also Appendix 1

6. ERSS Carrick-on-Suir 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: (Dept of Education, 2013, p. 28)

Reporting Bullying behaviour

- Any student or parent/guardian may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in ERSS Carrick-on-Suir. • All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

Investigating and Dealing with Incidents

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the relevant teacher will exercise his/her professional judgment to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
- Parents/guardians and students are required to co-operate with any investigation and ERSS Carrick-on-Suir issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible.
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.
- Where possible incidents should be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.
- Where possible incidents should be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all students concerned. Students who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way.

- 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.
- 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.
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after the interview by the teacher. It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s).
- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents/guardians 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 ERSS Carrick-on-Suir's Anti-Bullying policy). ERSS Carrick-on-Suir should give parents/guardians an opportunity to discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by ERSS Carrick-on-Suir and the supports provided to the students.
- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a student has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him how he is in breach of the ERSS Carrick-on-Suir Anti-Bullying Policy and efforts should be made to try to get him to see the situation from the perspective of the student being bullied.
- It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of students and parents/guardians) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the student being disciplined, his parents/guardians and ERSS Carrick-on-Suir.

Follow up and Recording.

- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgment, 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 relations between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable
 - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents/guardians or ERSS Carrick-on-Suir Principal or Deputy Principal

- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the student who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.
- Where a parent/guardian is not satisfied that ERSS Carrick-on-Suir has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent/guardian must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
- In the event that a parent/guardian has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, ERSS Carrick-on-Suir must advise the parents/guardians of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.
- It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner.

ERSS Carrick-on-Suir procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

Informal pre-determination that bullying has occurred.

- All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher.
- While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher must keep a written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.
- The relevant teacher must inform the principal of all incidents being investigated.
- Informal-determination that bullying has occurred.
- If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must 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.
- These records will be stored in a secure place.

Formal

The relevant teacher must use the recording template at Appendix 3 to record any bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

- in cases where he/she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within twenty school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred

- where ERSS Carrick-on-Suir has decided as part of its Anti-Bullying Policy that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal. These should be in line with the Code of Behaviour of ERSS Carrick-on-Suir.

When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal. These records are to be stored in a secure place.

Established intervention strategies.

- Teacher interviews with all students, negotiating agreements between students and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process.
- Working with parents/guardians to support school interventions
- No blame approach
- Circle Time
- Restorative interviews
- Restorative conferencing
- Implementing sociogram questionnaires
- Peer mediation where suitable training has been given.
- The traditional disciplinary approach
- Strengthening the victim
- Mediation
- The Support Group Method
- The Method of Shared Concern

7. The school's programme of support for working with students affected by bullying is as follows: (Dept of Education, 2013, p. 28)

- All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the students affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience e.g.:
 - Pastoral care system
 - Buddy/Peer mentoring system
 - Tutor/Year Head system
 - Care team/Student Support Team

- Group work such as circle time

- If students require counselling or further supports ERSS Carrick-on-Suir will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be for the student affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.
- Students should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

8. Supervision and Monitoring of Students

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 ERSS Carrick-on-Suir 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 specified i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

10. Access and Publication

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the erss.ie website and provided to the Parents' Council. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

11. Review

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. See checklist in Appendix 3. Notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the erss.ie website and provided to the Parents' Council. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of ERSS Carrick-on-Suir on

23/10/2024

This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in Appendix 4 of the Department's Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

Signed  Date 23/10/2024
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed  Date 23/10/2024
Principal

APPENDIX 1 Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate.

(Dept of Education, 2013, p. 42)

The following are some practical tips for immediate actions that can be taken to help build a positive school culture and climate and to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour.

- 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 and around the school.
- Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.
- Catch them 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.
- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.
- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.
- Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use.
- Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.
- Actively involve parents and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media.
- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.
- Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.
- All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour. Ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.
- School staff can get pupils to help them to identify bullying “hot spots” and “hot times” for bullying in the school.
- Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas, changing rooms, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision.
- Hot times again tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when pupils are in the playground/school yard or moving classrooms.
- Support the establishment and work of student councils.

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 (tick relevant box(es)) *

Student concerned	
Other Student	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es)) *

School yard	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other	

5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern.

--

6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) *

Physical Aggression		Cyber-bullying	
Damage to Property		Intimidation	
Isolation/Exclusion		Malicious Gossip	
Name Calling		Other (Specify)	

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

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Member of the Traveller Community	Other (Specify)

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

--

9. Details of actions taken

10. Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

* Note: The categories listed in the tables 3, 4 & 6 are suggested, and schools may add to or amend these to suit their own circumstances.

Appendix 4 Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation. The following checklist must be used for this purpose. The checklist is an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. In order to complete the checklist, an examination and review involving both quantitative and qualitative analysis, as appropriate across the various elements of the implementation of the school's anti-bullying policy will be required.

Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools?

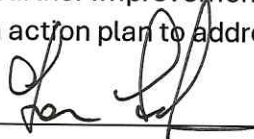
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?

Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?

Is the Board satisfied that school staff are sufficiently familiar with the policy and procedures to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy and procedures in their day-to-day work?

- Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?
- Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?
- Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?
- Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?
- Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?
- Has the Board received and minutes the periodic summary reports of the principal?
- Has the Board discussed how well the school is handling all reports of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and not therefore included in the principal's periodic report to the Board?
- Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?
- Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?
- Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?
- Has the data available from cases reported to the principal (by the bullying recording template) been analysed to identify any issues, trends or patterns in bullying behaviour?
- Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?
- Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?

Signed: (Chairperson BOM)



Date: 23/10/2024

Signed: (Principal)



Date: 23/10/2024

Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the anti-bullying policy

To: _____

The Board of Management of ERSS wishes to inform you that:

The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of ERSS Carrick-on-Suir on 27/10/2024

This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in Appendix 4 of the Department's Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

Signed [Signature] Date 27/10/2024
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed M. Phelan Date 23/10/24
Principal