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Date: June 2016

Anti-bullying Policy

1. 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 Ahane National 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 Primary and Post-Primary Schools* which were published in September 2013.

2. 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 (See Appendix 2) 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; and
 - explicitly addresses 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 (See 6.3 and Appendix 1), 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;
- Included at Appendix 3 and 4, a record of the review, it's outcome and the accompanying notification statement must be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department;
- A commonality of sanctions throughout the school.

3. 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 and
- 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 school'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 school's 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*.

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

Principal and all class teachers. All temporary and substitute teachers will be informed of this policy at induction. All matters will be addressed at a class level in accordance with this policy. If class teacher cannot resolve the situation using the interventions and sanctions then they progress to the level of deputy principal and principal for resolution.

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 the school are as follows (see Section 6.5 of the *Anti-bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*)

1. Each teacher will explicitly address issues of bullying, in an age appropriate way at the various class level including cyber bullying, identity based bullying

including transgender and homophobic bullying throughout the year during SPHE and record this in their short term plans and monthly report.

2. Teachers will avail of the upcoming incareer development in this area by the PDST.

Prevention strategies and awareness raising measures:

1. Stay Safe
2. Walk Tall
3. Rewards and sanctions, consistent and frequent
4. Build empathy, respect and resilience
5. Pupils know Principal is responsible for ultimate decision in anti-bullying matter

6. 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 (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

1. Procedures for Investigation in class
2. Follow-up in class
3. Recording: Each teacher will use the orange template Code of Behaviour/Anti Bullying Template (Appendix 1) and complete it at the time. It will be brought to the principal's attention at the monthly staff meeting and a photocopy of the Template given to the principal. Each teacher will pass on their pupil file to the incoming class teacher at the end of year/start of year. The Orange Template will travel with the pupil from class to class. Handover process: Teachers will sign a form on transfer of pupil file to the next teacher.

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*): using the PDST Anti Bullying Support Material Book

Investigating and Intervention Strategies: See Appendix A.

1. Traditional Approach
2. Mediation
3. Restorative Approach Questions when dealing with pupils involved in a bullying situation.

Santions:

1. Principal phones parents
2. Excluded from Fun Time activity in class
3. In- school exclusion (half day or full day)

8. 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.

9. Prevention of Harassment

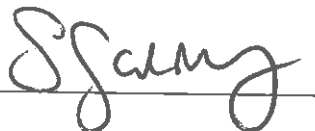
The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of pupils or staff or the harassment of pupils or staff on any of the nine grounds specified i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

10. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 13.6.16 (date)

11. 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.

12. 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.

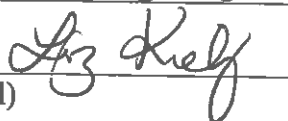
Signed:



(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: 23.6.16

Signed:


(Principal)

Date 28.6.16

Date of next review: June 2017.

Appendix 1



Orange Template:

Code of Behaviour / Anti Bullying
Meeting 2015-16



Code of Behaviour/Anti Bullying Meeting 2016-17

Teacher:

Date:

Time:

Agenda:

Child's Name and Class:

Parent/s in attendance:

Discussion:

Outcome:

Appendix 2



Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate

Appendix 2 Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate

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

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))*

Pupil concerned	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Pupil	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

Playground	<input type="checkbox"/>
Classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corridor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Toilets	<input type="checkbox"/>
School Bus	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

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

Physical Aggression	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cyber-bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>
Damage to Property	<input type="checkbox"/>	Intimidation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Isolation/Exclusion	<input type="checkbox"/>	Malicious Gossip	<input type="checkbox"/>
Name Calling	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

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9. Details of actions taken

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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.

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Appendix 4



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

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.

	Yes /No
Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools</i> ?	
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 minuted 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, Board of Management

Date _____

Signed _____
Principal

Date _____

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

To: _____

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

- o The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of _____ [date].
- o 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 _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date _____

Signed _____
Principal

Date _____

Appendix A



Support Programme for Ahane N.S.

Excerpts from PDST Anti Bullying Support Material

- Traditional Approach
- Mediation
- Restorative Approach

The traditional disciplinary approach

According to surveys of teachers and counsellors across many countries including the US, Australia, Canada, Germany, Norway and Finland, the disciplinary approach is seen by about 75% of school staff as the most appropriate way of dealing with most, if not all, forms of bullying (Bauman, 2008; Rigby, 2010). Essentially, it seeks to prevent bullying from continuing by imposing sanctions on the pupils(s) who were engaged in bullying behaviour. Sanctions imposed may include verbal reprimands, meetings with parents, temporary

removal from class, withdrawal of privileges, school community service, detention, internal school suspension, short-term external suspension, and permanent exclusion from school.

Parents often favour this approach also, especially if their children are being bullied at school, because it is perceived as giving a message to other pupils about what will happen to them if they engage in bullying.

The approach is often viewed as straightforward: the rules of behaviour established by the school are invoked, cases are investigated, and the transgressors duly punished. This apparent simplicity is contrasted with other more complex approaches in which counselling approaches are employed. By stating the consequences of different forms of bullying behaviour in advance, the school can represent the outcome for the pupils who engage in bullying as being brought about by their own actions.

Although this approach may deter some pupils from bullying, it can also result in pupils continuing to bully in more covert and less detectable ways that are at least equally hurtful to those they bully especially if the pupil who engages in bullying believes that the sanction imposed was unjust. This can result in a strong degree of resentment and a desire to continue the bullying, often in ways that are difficult to detect.

The approach requires a high degree of surveillance, which is often impossible or difficult to maintain. However, in cases of very violent or criminal behaviour, or in cases for which counselling approaches prove unsuccessful, sanctions are generally required.

Critics of the traditional disciplinary approach argue there is an assumption that when pupils are deterred from acting anti-socially they will be open to engaging in pro-social behaviour, especially if they are rewarded or praised afterwards for doing so. Rigby (pp. 43-44, 2010) makes ten recommendations to schools to support the traditional disciplinary approach:

1. Make it as clear as possible to the staff and to the pupils what bullying is, the forms it takes and especially the harm it does.
2. Carry out classroom discussions with pupils on the issue of bullying and especially on the kinds of rules that ought to govern relations between pupils in

the school. Have the class compile a list of reasonable guidelines for pupil behaviour.

3. As far as possible gain acceptance from the pupils that some 'consequences' are justified in cases of bullying. When more pupils are involved in the formulation and development of an anti-bullying policy, acceptance will be more widespread.
4. Intervene *as soon as possible* after an act of bullying has been identified so that the memory of the nature of the offence is present in the mind of the pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour.
5. Where possible, apply sanctions that are appropriate to the behaviour; for example, sanctions requiring recompense and restorative action to be undertaken rather than largely unrelated impositions such as writing 'lines'.
6. Apply positive reinforcements whenever the pupil acts constructively or helpfully towards another pupil, thus setting up habits that are incompatible with bullying.
7. Engage in 'serious' talks with the pupil to be punished (and if appropriate the parents too), giving the reasons for the actions being taken by the school.
8. Maintain a practice of rigorous surveillance of pupils' interpersonal behaviour in the classroom and playground. Punishment is more likely to work if behaviour is being carefully monitored.
9. Do whatever is possible to ensure that the authority of the school and teachers is justified and respected. This is particularly important among older pupils who are generally more distrustful of institutional authority than younger pupils.
10. Recognise that any action taken by teachers at the school that is widely seen as unfair or arbitrary will increase the distrust and disrespect felt by pupils, and result in disciplinary action taken in cases of bullying being less than effective.

According to research over 90 per cent of schools use the traditional disciplinary approach in the majority of bullying cases (Rigby, K., 2014).

Mediation

Mediation is an attempt to bring about a peaceful settlement or compromise between pupils through the intervention of a neutral party. Mediation is different from arbitration, which is sometimes carried out in schools when pupils in conflict accept the verdict of a third party (e.g. a teacher, Deputy Principal, Principal) as to how a conflict is to be resolved. With mediation the pupil who is bullied and the pupil who is engaged in bullying enter into negotiation with each other freely and are assisted by a trained mediator to reach an agreed

and peaceful solution. The mediator may be a trained member of staff or a student who has received relevant mediation training. The latter are known as peer mediators. There are advantages in training pupils as mediators. Pupils do not generally come across as authority figures and are less likely than teachers to impose their will on the proceedings. In addition, pupils are more likely to understand the situation in which other pupils find themselves.

Typically, mediation involves the following stages:

1. Identify pupils who are in conflict and are ready to negotiate, with the help of a mediator, to resolve their differences peaceably. Without this initial commitment mediation cannot proceed.
2. Arrange a meeting with the pupils who are in conflict. This is best organised when tempers have cooled. Generally, a private place is found where there are no interruptions.
3. All pupils are required to agree to certain rules that make the process of mediation predictable. This includes a requirement that only one pupil talks at a time while the other pupil listens without interrupting and each stay to hear each other out.
4. The mediator asks each pupil to describe in turn what has been happening. Each participant must repeat what has been said without making any judgements or comment. The mediator may prompt, if necessary, to seek more information and clarify what is being said. Importantly, at this stage there is to be no discussion or point scoring.
5. While the pupils describe what they see as having happened, the mediator must listen carefully and then summarise what has been said to the satisfaction of those involved.
6. Having established what happened according to the pupils, the next stage is to enable the pupils to share their feelings about each other's actions. Again, each of the pupils is expected to say how they felt without being interrupted and the other pupil reflects back what has been said – without making any comment. Again, the mediator summarises what has been said.
7. Next, the mediator invites the pupils to make suggestions about what could be done to improve matters and these are listed.

8. Having a list of options before them, the pupils are then invited to choose a solution to the conflict that is most acceptable to them. This may involve the pupils in finding a win-win course of action that effectively solves the problem or they agree a compromise. It is not up to the mediator to say which solution is best.
9. The mediator records the actions that the pupils have agreed to carry out, using their own words and each pupil signs a document to indicate that he/she will abide by the agreement.
10. Subsequently, the behaviour of the pupils is monitored and, if necessary, further meetings may be held.

In practice, there may be variation in how mediation is carried out. For instance, some schools have sought to mediate between pupils AFTER the pupil who is bullying has been sanctioned. Other schools give pupils who have bullied others the option of being sanctioned or accepting mediation. While other schools hold the threat of sanctions over the pupils who engages in bullying behaviour if they do not cooperate with mediation. These three variations are inconsistent with the general ethos of mediation, which requires that those in dispute are treated impartially, non-judgementally and helped to reach a solution that is in no way forced or part of a process that implies coercion or manipulation.

It is generally accepted that mediation is difficult in the following situations:

- If there is an imbalance of power between the pupil who is bullied and those that engage in bullying behaviour especially if the pupil engaged in bullying behaviour is admired by other pupils. For the pupil engaged in bullying behaviour there may be little or nothing to be gained from ending the bullying. The role of the mediator is to help bring about an agreed solution between all parties and in this situation the mediator may find it difficult to take a neutral stance
- If the bullying is severe and the pupil engaged in bullying behaviour is highly culpable. It may be difficult to find staff to mediate in such circumstances.
- Sometimes pupils may distrust the mediation process fearing that they would be ridiculed if they asked mediators for help. They also fear that confidentiality would not be respected.

- In certain cases, perceived norms are such that pupils feel obliged to fight and in these cases, mediation is rejected as a soft option. This suggests that changes in the school climate or ethos may sometimes need to be made before teacher or peer mediation is considered as one of the school's responses to addressing bullying behaviour. Once cases of conflict and bullying are dealt with successfully through mediation, the school ethos itself begins to change.
- When teacher or pupil mediators are poorly trained and/or time and resources for monitoring and supervising the mediation process is limited. A school environment that provides strong support for the mediation process is crucial to the success of the approach.

Mediation can not only effectively address certain forms of bullying behaviour but can also help to create a school ethos in which bullying is less likely to thrive. In a study of fifteen Year 5 mediators in a school in England, it was reported that all of the peer mediators had conducted at least one successful intervention and eight of them had been *'frequently successful'* (Cremin, 2002). According to research, teachers however are divided evenly about the acceptability of this approach.

Restorative practice

Restorative Practice (RP) is based on the concepts and principles of Restorative Justice. RP places relationships at the core of all problem solving. Bullying is viewed as a violation of people, property, and relationships. The practice involves getting the pupil who engages in bullying behaviour to reflect upon his/her unacceptable behaviour, experience a sense of remorse, and act to restore a damaged relationship with both the pupil who is bullied and the class and/or school community.

RP can be used to resolve problems of bullying involving two individuals, a small group or a class group. It can also be used at school community level (as a community conference) and can be attended by those involved in the bullying plus significant others such as parents. Necessary elements include the prior existence - or subsequent emergence - of remorse on the part of the pupil who engages in bullying behaviour and the readiness of the pupil who is bullied and others to accept the apology and restorative action of the pupil who bullied.

The application of RP has become increasingly popular in schools over the past 15 years, especially in Great Britain, Australia, the United States, Canada, and New Zealand. Like Mediation, Restorative Practice is often seen as a reaction against the traditional disciplinary approach that does not necessarily work to repair relationships, although both approaches are concerned with justice and seek to bring about a desired change in the pupil who engages in bullying behaviour.

The essence of RP is to bring about good or tolerable relationships when things have gone wrong. It seeks to heal the hurt that has occurred; to put it behind both the pupil who is bullied and the pupil who engaged in bullying behaviour. It puts repairing harm done to relationships over and above the need to assign blame and dispense sanctions.

RP may take many forms but all forms exist within an explicit framework of Fair Process, which allows everyone to understand the rationale for their actions. This Fair Process builds trust and commitment and involves three elements:

1. Engagement – include all pupils/adults who are involved in the bullying behaviour.
2. Explanation – adopt a shared understanding of the situation by all involved.
3. Clarity – involve all in a vision for the future.

Restorative Practice is not one action; rather it is a continuum involving the following:

- Restorative dialogue
- Restorative class meeting or group conference
- Mediation
- Restorative school/community conference and problem-solving circle.

Irrespective of the stages decided on for a resolution of the bullying behaviour the following key questions are utilized to ensure a fair process for all concerned:

- Questions for the pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour
 - *What happened?*
 - *What were you thinking about at the time?*

- *What have your thoughts been since?*
 - *Who has been affected by what you did?*
 - *In what way have they been affected?*
 - *What do you think needs to happen next?*
- **Questions for pupil(s) who is bullied:**
 - *What happened?*
 - *What were your thoughts at the time?*
 - *What have your thoughts been since?*
 - *How has this affected you and others?*
 - *What has been the hardest thing for you?*
 - *What do you think needs to happen next to make things right?*

Restorative continuum for schools

For all stages of the continuum, it is crucial that the facilitator has been trained in Restorative Practices and before any RP meeting commences a set of ground rules are agreed by all present. Class/group meetings and school/community conferences require very careful planning. Stages of the RP continuum are as follows:

- **Restorative dialogue** – A restorative dialogue is a meeting between the pupil who is bullied and the pupil engaged in bullying behaviour. A member of school staff who is trained in RP (class teacher, resource teacher, Principal Etc.) facilitates the dialogue. This can be done on the spot in response to a report by the pupil who is bullied or a member of staff who has witnessed repeated incidents viewed as not of a serious nature (e.g. a put-down or nasty comment, property borrowed without permission, a pupil being pushed). Time is given to both the pupil who is bullied and the pupil engaged in bullying to explain not only what happened but also how they felt about the behaviour. After a restorative action has been suggested, undertaken, and (importantly) accepted by the pupil who is bullied, the case may be concluded and the situation may continue to be monitored. Teachers often appreciate such a detailed script as it provides clear guidance and structure in dealing with cases of bullying behaviour. Depending on the age and cognitive ability of the pupils, an RP facilitator may give more detailed direction e.g. post agreement the pupil engaged in bullying behaviour may be explicitly taught how to

make an appropriate apology and the pupil who is bullied may be explicitly taught how to respond positively to such an apology. Incidents of a more serious nature require a more formal dialogue at a designated time.

- **Class meeting or group conference** - In some cases it is considered appropriate to apply restorative practices in a class or group situation, for example, when the issue is of a more serious nature and is one in which a full class or group is implicated and their views are relevant to a successful resolution of the problem. In such a case, a meeting is held involving all the pupils in a class/group, including those who have not participated in the bullying in any way. The RP principles and set of questions remain the same. A class/group meeting requires careful planning, preparation and cooperation around timetable issues and may involve several teachers. The pupil who is bullied and the pupil engaged in bullying behaviour are encouraged to speak and explain how they have felt about their experiences. How the other pupils respond is of crucial importance. The expectation is that the reactions and views of the other pupils will exert pressure on the pupil who is engaged in bullying behaviour to feel remorseful and act restoratively. This class/group meeting is not a trial by pupils. Its purpose is to give a message to pupils who engage in bullying behaviour that their behaviour is reprehensible and that restorative action is desirable. If this happens, it will meet with the approval of the wider group. Parents are usually notified before and /or after the meeting or conference. They also receive a copy of the agreement including plans for monitoring and follow-up.
- **Community conference** – According to the National Centre for Restorative in Education a community conference is a formal process which ‘seeks to repair the harm done to relationships within a community by allowing everyone involved to meet and gain a better understanding from each other of the impact of a particular incident (s), the reasons for it and the preferred outcomes. The process usually involves the pupil who is bullied and his/her parents and/or supporters and the pupil who engaged in bullying and his/her supporters as well as key school personnel and behaviour/resource support staff, where applicable’. The intension of such a conference is to promote a comprehensive understanding of what has happened on the part of everyone present – the pupil who is bullied, the pupil engaged in bullying behaviour and all interested parties – in order to restore peace and harmony. The effectiveness of such a meeting depends in part on the work done ‘behind the scenes’ by the RP facilitator in contacting

and preparing the participants for the conference. After both set of pupils (pupil who is bullied and pupil who is engaged in bullying) are given an opportunity to be heard, the role of those present is to consider and accept whatever apologies and restorative acts are forthcoming. Only a trained RP facilitator should conduct this meeting.

In preparing for the introduction of Restorative Practice, some schools initially introduce a restorative approach to their current practices. This allows all members of the school community to gain a clear understanding of RP from the staff members who received training. It also ensures that all staff are included in the change process to RP practices.
