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.

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

• 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

• 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 Suri 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

• 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

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.

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**

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?
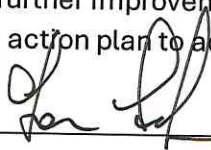
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?

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: _____