



MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
AND
HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

**NATIONAL ANTI-BULLYING POLICY AND
STRATEGY
FOR
PRIMARY, SECONDARY SCHOOLS
AND
PROFESSIONAL CENTRES**

24th January 2018

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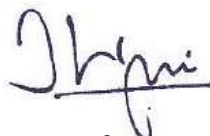
FOREWORD

The National Anti-bullying Policy and Strategy for Primary, Secondary Schools and Professional Centres is the result of consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, ensuing a strong consensus around what our approach to anti-bullying behaviours should be; what our roles and responsibilities are; and how we can all contribute to this important document. I am indebted to the invaluable contribution of all who have taken part in this process, which I am sure will help significantly in fostering an environment free from bullying of any kind and in which learners feel safe and supported.

Protecting children from bullying is not just an ethical imperative or a laudable aim of our education policy: it is equally a question of human rights. As we all know, bullying in schools compromises children's rights to protection from discrimination, to an inclusive and relevant education, to the highest attainable standard of health, to the right to be heard, and to have children's best interests regarded as a primary consideration in all decisions affecting their lives. These rights are enshrined in various legal instruments including the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Providing safe and happy places to learn is essential to achieving school improvement, raising learner achievement and attendance, promoting equality and diversity, and ensuring the safety and well-being of all members of the school community. Educational institutions need to take an active approach to promoting good behaviour, respect for others and to tackling all forms of bullying. A preventative approach helps to safeguard the well-being of their learners and staff as well as playing their part in building a society in which we all treat each other with dignity and respect.

With this policy and strategy, we are sending a strong message to all that bullying is not acceptable in our educational institutions. I am calling now for a Whole-School approach to our anti-bullying activities so that all staff and learners have the tools and confidence they need to better prevent and tackle bullying behaviours whenever and wherever they occur. I count on the readiness of the community and parents to support institutions in this process. I call on each of you to take up this engagement and ensure that our educational institutions become bullying free and safer places to develop and learn.



Mr. Joël Morgan

Minister for Education and Human Resource Development

SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 The role of the educational institutions is to provide an appropriate education for all its learners. A stable, secure learning environment is an essential requirement to achieve this goal. Bullying behaviour, by its very nature, undermines and does not promote quality of education. Research shows that bullying can have short and long-term effects on the physical and mental well-being of learners, on engagement with educational institutions, on self-confidence and on the ability to pursue educational and training ambitions and interests.

1.1.2 Educational institution-based bullying can be positively and firmly addressed through a range of institution-based interventions and strategies guided by the Sector's Policy and Strategy through which all members of the institution's community are enabled to act effectively in addressing this behaviour. While it is recognised that home and societal factors play a substantial role both in the cause and in the prevention of bullying, the role of the educational institution in preventative work is also crucial and should not be underestimated. Educational institution-based initiatives can either reinforce positive efforts or help counteract unsuccessful attempts of parents to change unacceptable behaviour. Parents and learners have a particularly important role and responsibility in helping the educational institution to prevent and address institution-based bullying behaviour and to deal with any negative impact within the educational institution of bullying behaviour that occurs elsewhere. *In this document, any reference(s) to parent(s) can be taken to refer also to legal guardian(s) where applicable.*

1.1.3 International research clearly indicates the crucial importance of the existence of and implementation of educational institution student behavior policy, setting out the institution's approach to preventing and tackling bullying.

A Ministry's National Anti-Bullying Policy and Strategy supported by effective operational guidelines, when developed and implemented across the institution's community can be the cornerstone in countering bullying behaviour in educational institutions.

The Ministry's National Anti-Bullying Policy and Strategy will further contribute to the realization of the Values Statement "**Creating an Inclusive School Environment which challenges every individual to achieve his/ her highest potential**" and the Principle Statement "**Education for Social Cohesion**" of the Ministry's Policy Statement "**Education for a Learning Society (2000)**".

1.2 Requirement on all educational institutions to have an Anti-Bullying Operational Procedures and Guidelines within the Framework of the overall Code of Behaviour and the National Anti-Bullying Policy and Strategy

1.2.1 The Constitution of the Republic of Seychelles (1993) and the Children Act (15th July, 1982), make provision for the protection and holistic development of the children of Seychelles. They establish the conditions to exercise the appropriate rights and responsibilities with regards to children.

Under the Education Act (2004), all educational institutions are required to have in place a code of behaviour. The institution's Code of Behaviour is to be prepared in line with the following publications issued by the Ministry –

- *The Whole-School Behaviour Policy (January 2010)*
- *Code of Conduct for Primary Schools (June 2010)*
- *Code of Conduct for Secondary Schools (June 2010)*

The School Code of Conduct is to be approved by the Principal Secretary responsible for Education.

1.2.2 In light of the increasing reported incidences of school-based bullying and the national concerns being expressed towards this development institutions are required to have an Anti-Bullying Operational Procedures and Guidelines to better respond to the section of bullying in the Code of Conduct publications.

1.3 National Anti-Bullying Policy and Strategy for Primary, Secondary and Professional Centres

1.3.1 These *National Anti-Bullying Policy and Strategy for Primary, Secondary and Professional Centres* has been developed following the recent National Assembly deliberations and decisions, consultation with the relevant education partners, and review of international publications on the issue.

1.3.2 The purpose of the Policy and Strategy is to give direction and guidance to educational institution's authorities and personnel in preventing and tackling institution-based bullying behaviour amongst its learners and in dealing with any negative impact within institution of bullying behaviour that occurs elsewhere. The Policy and Strategy apply to all Ministry-owned primary, secondary schools,

professional centres (as defined in the Tertiary Education Act 2011) which are attended by learners **under the age of 18 years**, and registered private schools.

Where an educational institutional institution also caters for adults learners the Policy and Strategy also applies to those adult learners. The authorities' personnel of educational institutions are required to adhere to the Policy and Strategy and related procedures in dealing with allegations and incidents of institutionally –based bullying.

1.3.3 All School Councils and Professional Centres Boards must formally adopt and implement the Anti-Bullying Policy and Strategy. The institution's Anti-Bullying Operational Procedures and Guidelines developed from the Policy and Strategy must be made available to institution's personnel, published on the institution's website (where it exists) and be otherwise readily accessible to parents and learners on request) A copy of the institution's Anti-Bullying Operational Procedures and Guidelines must be provided to the relevant authorities of the respective departments of the Ministry.

The Policy and Strategy will be reviewed as and when considered necessary.

1.4 Summary of Main Elements of the Policy and Strategy

1.4.1 The following is a summary of the main elements of the National Anti-Bullying Policy and Strategy:

- All School Councils and Professional Centres Boards are required to formally adopt and implement the National Anti-Bullying Policy and Strategy and to develop and implement procedures that fully complies with the requirements of the Policy and Strategy. A template for adoption of the National Anti-Bullying Policy and Strategy which must be used by all educational institutions for this purpose is provided in **Appendix 01** of the Policy and Strategy.
- The Educational Institution's Anti-Bullying Operational Procedures and Guidelines derived from the Policy and Strategy must be made available to institution's personnel, published on the institution's website (where it exists) be readily accessible to parents and learners.
- A copy of the institution's Anti-Bullying Operational Procedures and Guidelines must be provided to the relevant authorities of the respective Departments and other personnel if requested. In the context of this Policy and Strategy,
- ***Bullying is defined as unwanted, negative, and harmful behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.***

The Policy and Strategy makes clear that this definition includes cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying (such as homophobic bullying and racist bullying).

- The Policy and Strategy outline key principles of best practice for both preventing and tackling bullying and require all educational institutions to commit to these principles in their Anti-Bullying Operational Procedures and Guidelines. The key principles are:
 - A positive educational institution’s culture and climate;
 - Effective leadership;
 - An institution’s -wide approach;
 - A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
 - Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures);
 - Effective supervision and monitoring of learners;
 - Support 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 National Anti-Bullying Policy and Strategy.

- The Policy and Strategy recognises that a cornerstone in the prevention of bullying is a positive educational institutions culture and climate that is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity and respect. These procedures outline key elements of a positive institutional culture and climate and also provide educational institutions with some practical tips for building a positive institutional culture and climate.

- The Policy and Strategy highlights the importance of an institution -wide (management, staff, learners and parents) approach. In addition to the role of management and staff, parents and learners have a role and responsibility in helping the institution to prevent and address institution -based bullying behaviour and to address any negative impact within institution of bullying behaviour that occurs elsewhere.

- The Policy and Strategy requires that the prevention of bullying must be an integral part of institution’s Anti-Bullying Operational Procedures and Guidelines. The education and prevention strategies that the institution will implement must be documented in the anti-bullying Operational Procedures and Guidelines must explicitly deal with the issue of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.

- An institution’s Anti-Bullying Operational Procedures and Guidelines must also set out the institution’s procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying and the institution’s guidelines for the formal noting and recording of bullying behaviour. The institution’s guidelines must be consistent with the guidance and direction set out in this Policy and Strategy.

- The Policy and Strategy emphasises that the primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and restore as far as is practicable the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame).

- In any case where it has been determined by the relevant teacher/ lecturer that bullying behaviour has occurred-
 - the parents 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 the institution operational procedures and guidelines); and
 - 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.
- The relevant teacher/ lecturer must record the bullying behaviour in the standardised recording template at **Appendix 3** (and a copy must be provided to the Headteacher Director or Deputy as applicable) in the following circumstances:
 - 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; and
 - where the educational institution has decided as part of its anti-bullying operational procedures and guidelines that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Headteacher/ Director or Deputy as applicable.
- The operational procedures and guidelines include oversight arrangements which require that, at least once in every school term, the Headteacher/ Director or Deputy will provide a report to the School of Council or Board of Professional Centres setting out:
 - the overall number of bullying cases reported (by means of the bullying recording template in **Appendix 3**) to the Headteacher/ Director or Deputy since the previous report to the School Council or Board of Professional Centres and
 - confirmation that all of these cases have been, or are being, dealt with in accordance with the institution's anti-bullying operational guidelines.
 - As part of the oversight arrangements, the School Council or Board of Professional Centres must undertake an annual review of the institution's anti-bullying operational guidelines and its implementation by the institution. Written notification that the review has been completed must be made available to institution's personnel, published on the school website (where it exists) be otherwise readily accessible to parents and learners on request). A standardised notification which must be used for this purpose is included at **Appendix 4**. A record of the review and its outcome must be made available, to the respective authorities of the Ministry.

1.4.2 The above is a summary of the main elements of the Policy and Strategy and the related operational procedures and guidelines at the level of educational institutions to be derived from the Policy and Strategy.

SECTION TWO: DEFINITION AND TYPES OF BULLYING

2.1 Definition of bullying

2.1.1 In the context of these procedures **bullying is defined as unwanted negative and harmful behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.**

2.1.2 The following types of bullying behaviour are included in this non-exhaustive definition:

- i. deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying;
- ii. cyber-bullying; and
- iii. identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of a recognized community sub-group, and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

2.1.3 In addition, in the context of these procedures 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.

2.1.4 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 this definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the institution's code of behaviour. A single incident can have a serious effect on a learner and may also constitute harassment which is legally prohibited in educational institutions under equality - legislation.

Harassment is any form of unwanted conduct related to any of the nine discriminatory grounds (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of a recognized community).

Information on the impact, indicators and other characteristics of bullying behaviour is set out in Sections 3 and 4 of these Procedures.

2.2 Types of bullying

The following are some of the types of bullying behaviour that can occur amongst learners:

- **Physical aggression:** This behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While learners often engage in 'fights', they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.
- **Intimidation:** Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation: it may be based on the use of very aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon. Particularly upsetting can be a facial expression which conveys aggression and/or dislike.
- **Isolation/exclusion and other relational bullying:** This occurs where a certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or all of the class group. This practice is usually initiated by the person engaged in bullying behaviour and can be difficult to detect. It may be accompanied by writing insulting remarks about the learner in public places, by passing around notes about or drawings of the learner or by whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard. Relational bullying occurs when a person's attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. One of the most common forms includes control: "Do this or I won't be your friend anymore" (implied or stated); a group ganging up against one person (girl or boy); non-verbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumours about a person or giving them the "silent treatment".
- **Cyber-bullying:** This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, e-mail, instant messaging (IM), apps, gaming sites, chat-rooms and other online technologies. Being the target of inappropriate or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying. As cyber-bullying uses technology to perpetrate bullying behaviour and does not require face to face contact, cyber-bullying can occur at any time (day or night). Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyber-bullying. For example, a target may be sent homophobic text messages or pictures may be posted with negative comments about a person's sexuality, appearance etc.
- **Name calling:** Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) which hurts, insults or humiliates should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name-calling of this type refers to physical appearance, e.g., size or clothes worn. Accent or distinctive voice characteristics may attract negative attention. Academic ability can also provoke name calling. This tends to operate at two extremes. There are those who are singled out for attention because they are perceived to be weak academically. At the other extreme there are those who, because they are perceived as high achievers, are also targeted.

- **Damage to property:** Personal property can be the focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, school books and other learning material or interference with a learner's locker or personal belongings. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.
- **Extortion:** Demands for money may be made, often accompanied by threats (sometimes carried out in the event of the targeted learner not delivering on the demand). A learner may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to another who is engaged in bullying behaviour.

SECTION THREE: IMPACT AND INDICATORS OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

3.1 Impacts of bullying behaviour

- 3.1.1 Learner who are being bullied may develop feelings of insecurity, humiliation and extreme anxiety and thus may become more vulnerable. Self-confidence may be damaged with a consequent lowering of self-esteem. While they may not talk about what is happening to them, their suffering is indicated through changes in mood and behaviour. Extreme cases of bullying may result in suicide. It is, therefore, essential to be alert to changes in behaviour as early intervention can be very effective.
- 3.1.2 Bullying places the individual's body under physical stress which can trigger different forms of physical changes. Consequently, learners experiencing bullying may exhibit a variety of symptoms including sudden change in attire, weight loss/ gain, and the immune functions.
- 3.1.3 Learners who witness bullying may also be affected and may suffer in similar ways to those who are bullied. For example, learners who witness identity-based bullying and share that identity can experience anxiety and feel under threat themselves. Learners can also feel guilt or distress at not being able to help the person being bullied.
- 3.1.4 There are also consequences for individuals who engage in bullying behaviour. Learners who become involved in such behaviour can be at higher risk of depression. Other possible long-term consequences may include an increased risk of developing an anti-social personality, anxiety disorders, a likelihood of substance abuse and law-breaking behaviour in adulthood and decreased educational and occupational attainment.

3.2 Indicators of bullying behaviour

- 3.2.1 The following signs and symptoms may suggest that a learner is being bullied:
- i. Anxiety about travelling to and from the educational institution e.g. requesting parents to drive or collect him/her, changing travel routes, avoiding regular times for travelling to and from the educational institution;
 - ii. Unwillingness to go to the educational institutions, refusal to attend, truancy;
 - iii. Deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in education – based learning;
 - iv. Pattern of physical illnesses e.g. headaches, stomach aches;

- v. Unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour which may be particularly noticeable before returning to the educational institution after weekends or more especially after longer holidays;
- vi. Visible signs of anxiety or distress e.g. stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, bedwetting;
- vii. Spontaneous out-of-character comments about either learners or teachers;
- viii. Possessions missing or damaged;
- ix. Increased requests for money or stealing money;
- x. Unexplained bruising or cuts or damaged clothing; and
- xi. Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling him/her.

3.2.2 There may be other signs depending on the individual and his/her circumstances. The above signs do not necessarily mean that a learner is being bullied but if repeated or occurring in combination, these signs do warrant investigation in order to establish what is affecting the learners.

SECTION FOUR: CHARACTERISTICS ASSOCIATED WITH BULLYING

It is important to recognise that any learner can be bullied or can engage in bullying behaviour.

4.1 The learner who engages in bullying behaviour

- 4.1.1 A significant proportion of bullying is not merely behavioural but is rooted in a lack of respect for diversity and in social inequalities. “Prejudice-based” or “identity-based” bullying can be a significant factor in bullying behaviour.
- 4.1.2 Learners who engage in bullying behaviour tend to display aggressive attitudes combined with a low level of self-discipline. They may lack any sense of remorse convincing themselves that the other person deserves the treatment they are receiving.
- 4.1.3 Learners who engage in bullying behaviour can be attention seeking: setting out to impress bystanders and responding to the reaction their behaviour provokes. They can lack the ability to empathise. They can appear unaware or indifferent to the other person’s feelings. It is of note that learners who exhibit bullying behaviour often suffer from a lack of confidence and have low self-esteem.
- 4.1.4 Learners who engage in bullying behavior is likely to experience difficulty in conforming to rules and regulations. Additionally, they can manipulate others or rules and regulations to conform to their desires.
- 4.1.5 However, it must also be recognised that learners who engage in bullying behaviour do not always intend to bully or may not recognise the potential negative impact of their words and actions on others.
- 4.1.6 It is not uncommon to find that learners who engage in bullying behaviour may also have been bullied themselves.

4.2 The Learner who is bullied

- 4.2.1 Any learner through no fault of their own may be a target of bullying. It is common in the course of normal interaction for learners to tease or taunt each other. However, at a certain point, teasing and taunting may become forms of bullying behaviour. As learners can be particularly quick to notice differences in others, learners who are perceived as different in some way can be more prone to encounter such behaviour. However, the learners who are most at risk of being bullied are those who react in a vulnerable and distressed manner. The seriousness and duration of the bullying behaviour can be related to the learner’s continuing response to the verbal, physical or psychological aggression.

- 4.2.2 Learners who are bullied often experience difficulties in speaking up about bullying. The difficulties include:
- i. Fear of reprisals;
 - ii. Concerns about being perceived as a “tell-tale” for reporting bullying;
 - iii. Concerns about “getting into trouble” with the headteacher , Director or teacher for reporting bullying;
 - iv. Not having evidence to back up a bullying allegation;
 - v. Not knowing how the matter will be dealt with by the institution; and
 - vi. Not feeling fully confident of being believed.

4.3 More vulnerable learners

- 4.3.1 While bullying can happen to any learner, it is known that some may be more vulnerable to or at risk of experiencing bullying. Such vulnerable groups include learners with disabilities or special educational needs, those with physical appearance perceived as different from the norm, those from minority cultures and migrant groups, lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) learners and those perceived to be lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) and learners of minority religious faiths.
- 4.3.2 There can be an increased vulnerability to bullying amongst learners with special educational needs and particularly those who do not understand social cues and/or have difficulty communicating. Some learners with complex needs may lack understanding of social situations and therefore trust everyone implicitly. Such learners may be more vulnerable because they do not have the same social skills or capacity as others to recognise and defend themselves against bullying behaviour. Research suggests that children with disabilities and with special educational needs (SEN) are more likely to be bullied than others. Bullying can also have a more severe impact on such children. For example, some studies which compare the impact of bullying on children with and without certain disabilities, such as a speech and language difficulty, show that bullying has a greater impact on self-esteem for those with a disability.
- 4.3.3 Homophobic and transphobic bullying (bullying targeted at those who are or who are perceived to be LGBT) has also been found to be prevalent with evidence that such learners have particular difficulty in speaking up or reporting the bullying behaviour.

4.4 Bystanders: A bystander is someone who observes bullying happening but does not intervene or get assistance. Bystanding is not passive and can contribute significantly to the impact of bullying. As onlookers, they encourage perpetrators, who can feel driven on by the audience. Peer involvement occurs frequently in the context of bullying in schools. Bystanders take on different roles, some more active than others.

Bystanders are a significant part of the bullying social context, either intentionally or unintentionally. They may feel unable or are unwilling to intervene to stop the bullying or to seek help. Interventions that empower and encourage peers to act pro-socially to prevent and respond to bullying can contribute significantly to reducing its occurrence and impact.

4.5 Where does bullying happen?

Bullying can happen anywhere at any time but there are certain times and places which particularly facilitate bullying.

4.5.1 Cyber-bullying: Access to technology means that cyber-bullying can happen around the clock and the learner's home may not even be a safe haven from such bullying. Learners are increasingly communicating in ways that are often unknown to adults and free from supervision. The nature of these technologies means digital content can be shared and seen by a very wide audience almost instantly and is almost impossible to delete permanently. While cyber bullying often takes place at home and at night, the impact can also be felt in educational institutions.

4.5.2 Areas of unstructured activity: Bullying in educational institutions frequently takes place in the playground/ yard. Institution's grounds with hidden or obscured parts may provide an environment conducive to bullying. Many common playground/yard games present opportunities for bullying because of their physical nature. It is relatively easy to single out and bully another learner. The noise level masks much of what is going on. The playground/ yard provides the opportunity for older learners to pick on younger learners. It can also be the setting for bullying by groups. Continuing provocation may eventually lead to a physical fight and ironically in some cases the person being bullied may appear to be the aggressor because he/she finally gives vent to his/her frustration.

Toilets, corridors, locker areas, changing rooms, showers, staircases and assembly hall may be the scene of verbal, psychological and physical bullying. The behaviour of learners in those areas needs careful monitoring.

4.5.3 Bullying in the classroom: Bullying may also take place in class. It may occur subtly through glances, looks, but may take the more overt form of physical intimidation. It may also be exacerbated if a classroom atmosphere prevails whereby learners are allowed to make derogatory comments about their classmates or other teachers. However, teachers need to be alert to the underlying reasons for such comments in case learners are trying to disclose something which is disturbing them and thus needs further investigation.

Bullying may also occur between class periods irrespective of whether the class or the teacher moves.

- 4.5.4 **Coming to and from Educational Institutions:** The area immediately outside the educational institution, the local shops and local neighborhood are often the scenes of bullying. Bullying can also take place at the bus-stop or on the journey to and from school whether the individuals are walking, cycling or on educational institutions or public buses.

SECTION FIVE: EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION'S ANTI-BULLYING OPERATIONAL PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

5.1 Requirement to have and Anti-Bullying Operational Procedures and Guidelines and the use the Policy Strategy Template.

- 5.1.1 As set out in Section 1.2 of the Policy and Strategy, in accordance with Education Act, 2004 The Whole School Policy (January 2010) and the Code of Conduct for Primary, Secondary Schools (June 2010) Educational Institutions , are now required to have an Anti-Bullying Operational Procedures and Guidelines within the framework of their overall code of behavior for learners that is in harmony with the Policy and Strategy.
- 5.1.2 An Anti-Bullying Operational Procedures and Guidelines Template which must be used by all educational institutions is set out in **Appendix 1**.
- 5.1.3 Certain elements of the policy template are standardised across all educational institutions. Other aspects of the template provide flexibility to enable the Policy and Strategy be tailored to meet the particular needs and circumstances of the learners and educational institution in question. However, the development of the institution's Operational Guideline, the Policy and Strategy itself, its implementation and review must be fully consistent with the guidance and directions set out in these procedures. All parts of the Operational Procedures and Guidelines Template must be completed by an educational institution.
- 5.1.4 The Anti-Bullying Policy and Strategy must be formally adopted by the School Councils and Board of .the Professional Centres and approved by the Principal Secretary - Education

5.2 Development of the Anti-Bullying Operational Procedures and Guidelines

- 5.2.1 The School of Councils and Board of the Professional Centres in developing its Anti-Bullying Operational Procedures and Guidelines must formulate the document in co-operation with both teaching and non-teaching institution's staff under the leadership of the Headteacher/ Director and in consultation with parents and learners. In this way, the development of institution-wide strategies for dealing with bullying is shared by all concerned.
- 5.2.2 It is essential that all concerned have a clear understanding of the Policy and Strategy content if it is to form the basis for developing effective Operational Procedures and Guidelines for dealing with the problem at the level of institutions. The main aims of an Anti-Bullying Operational Procedures and Guidelines are as follows:
 - i. To create a positive institution's culture and climate that is inclusive and welcoming of difference;

- ii. To create an institution's climate which is open, supportive and encourages learners to disclose and discuss bullying behaviour;
- iii. To raise awareness amongst the entire institution's community (including institution's management team, teachers, learners, parents, volunteers etc.) that bullying is unacceptable behaviour;
- iv. To ensure comprehensive supervision and monitoring through which all aspects of the institution's activities are kept under observation;
- v. To provide procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying behaviour;
- vi. To provide procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour;
- vii. To develop a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour;
- viii. To work with and through the various local agencies in countering all forms of bullying and anti-social behaviour; and
- ix. To facilitate ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the institution's Anti-Bullying Operational Procedures and Guidelines.

5.3 Commitment to key principles of good practice

5.3.1 Every educational institution must explicitly state in its Anti-Bullying Operational Guidelines that the institution recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on learners and that the institution is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

- i. A positive institution's culture and climate which-
 - is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
 - encourages learners to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
 - promotes respectful relationships across the school community;
- ii. Effective leadership;
- iii. An institution -wide approach;

- iv. A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
- v. Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that-
 - o build empathy, respect and resilience in learners; and
 - o explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying;
- vi. Effective supervision and monitoring of learners;
- vii. Support for staff;
- viii. Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
- ix. On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

5.3.2 More details in relation to each of the above principles is set out in Section 6 of these procedures.

5.4 Communication of the Anti-Bullying Operational Procedures and Guidelines

- 5.4.1 As stated in Section 1.3.3, the institution's anti-bullying Operational Procedures and Guidelines must be made available to institution's personnel, published on the institution's website (where it exists), be readily accessible to parents and learners. A copy of the institution's Anti-Bullying Operational Procedures and Guidelines must be provided to the relevant authorities of the Departments of the Ministry.
- 5.4.2 The School Councils and Board of Professional Centres must ensure that the Operational Guidelines are regularly highlighted and promoted on an institution-wide basis with particular attention being given to incoming learners and their parents.

Institutional Leadership Team must ensure that learners, parents and staff members are made aware of the relevant teachers/ lecturers responsible for dealing with bullying concerns. Institution's rules and other information on bullying should be provided in learner friendly, age appropriate formats and should be displayed around the institution's building.

5.5 Prevention of harassment

- 5.5.1 Educational institutions have an obligation under existing national legislations and policies to take such steps as are reasonably practicable to prevent harassment and sexual harassment.
- 5.5.2 Educational institutions shall not permit learners to harass other learners. This prohibition also applies to staff or anyone who visits the institution including parents, visiting sports teams etc. Under existing related legislation, educational institution may be liable for harassment committed by an employee in the course of their work, whether or not it was done with the institution's knowledge or approval. Institutions may also be liable for harassment committed by people acting on their behalf who are not employees.
- 5.5.3 All educational institutions are required to confirm in their anti-bullying policy that the institution will, in accordance with its obligations under appropriate national legislations and policies, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of learners or staff or the harassment of learners or staff on any of the grounds.

5.6 Establishment of a Learner Support Group

- 5.6.1 An important factor in the prevalence of bullying behaviour is the degree to which learners become "accepting" bystanders or even participants when a classmate is being bullied. Research is now showing that learners are more inclined to confine to their peers when being bullied. Empowering learners to work together to stand up to bullying behaviours, encouraging them to reach out to peers and celebrating acts of kindness, and reinforcing the availability of adult support can transform what experts call the "silent majority" into a "caring majority" of learners who become part of the anti-bullying solution.
- 5.6.2 Educational institutions should therefore encourage the establishment of learners support groups which can act as mediators in cases of bullying behaviour. They will also support learners in building resilience and character.

5.7 Social Emotional Development Skills

- 5.7.1 While bullying is a pervasive problem in educational institutions, specific actions can be taken to improve the institution's climate and encourage positive interactions to reduce or prevent bullying.

- 5.7.2 In order to successfully address bullying problems, the entire institution must foster a culture where living values are explicitly endorsed, acknowledged and valued. Expectations for how staff and learners treat one another should be clearly reflected in institution's policies, and the rules for classroom interaction should be consistently modelled by adults and enforced and reinforced in all institution's settings.
- 5.7.3 At the learners' level, educational institutions should develop learners' skills in the areas of self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationships, and responsible decision-making. These core skills are the foundational competencies that learners need in order to deal with bullying behaviours.

SECTION SIX: KEY PRINCIPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

6.1 Positive Institution culture and climate

- 6.1.1 A cornerstone in the prevention of bullying is a positive institution's culture and climate that is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity and respect. An institution's policy on bullying is most effective when supported by a positive institution climate which encourages respect, tolerance, trust, care, consideration and support for others.
- 6.1.2 Central to a positive institution culture is respectful relationships across the entire institution community. This encompasses relationships amongst peers (e.g. learner to learner, teacher to teacher) and relationships between groups (e.g. teachers and learners, parents and teachers etc.).
- 6.1.3 The misconception that bullying is a normal phase of development and that it teaches learners to toughen up needs to be challenged. The institution must endeavour to create an environment where learners feel comfortable and free to discuss and disclose incidents of bullying. This may also require challenging prevailing attitudes so that learners realise that they also have a responsibility for the safety and welfare of fellow learners.
- 6.1.4 Educational Institutions should therefore encourage and strengthen open dialogue between all school staff and learners. Institutions should ensure that they provide appropriate opportunities for learners to raise their concerns in an environment that is comfortable for the learner. This dialogue should encompass issues that happen outside the institution, including cyber-bullying. In order to accomplish this, institutions may also need to consider how best to address topics that are masked by prejudice and silence such as homophobic bullying.
- 6.1.5 Key elements of a positive institution culture and climate are outlined in Table A, on page 24. Some practical pointers for building a positive institution culture and climate are also set out in **Appendix 2**.

Table A: Key elements of a positive school culture and climate

- The institution acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy the institution in a secure environment.
- The institution acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual and his/her worth as a human being.
- The institution promotes positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among all its members.
- The institution prohibits vulgar, offensive, sectarian or other aggressive behaviour or language by any of its members.
- The institution has a clear commitment to promoting equity in general and gender equity in particular in all aspects of its functioning.
- The institution has the capacity to change in response to learners' needs.
- The institution identifies aspects of curriculum through which positive and lasting influences can be exerted towards forming learners' attitudes and values.
- The institution takes particular care of "at risk" learners and uses its monitoring systems to facilitate early intervention where necessary and it responds to the needs, fears or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner.
- The institution recognises the need to work in partnership with and keep parents informed on procedures to improve relationships on an institution-wide basis.
- The institution recognises the role of parents in equipping the learner with a range of life-skills.
- The institution recognises the role of other community agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying.
- The institution promotes habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the interdependence of people in groups and communities.
- The institution promotes qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among all its members both in the institution and out of the institution.
- Staff members share a collegiate responsibility, under the direction of the Headteacher/ Director, to act in preventing bullying/aggressive behaviour by any member of the institution's community.

6.2 Effective leadership

- 6.2.1 Effective leadership, supporting an institution's culture and climate that celebrates difference, is key to good practice. The responsibility of all those in leadership roles within the educational institution is of great importance in stimulating an institution-wide approach to preventing and tackling bullying.
- 6.2.2 The Headteacher/ Director in particular has a key role in dealing with bullying behaviour in the institution because he/she is in a strong position to influence attitudes and set standards in dealing with such behaviour. Headteachers / Directors and other leaders in the institution, including all teachers, should strive to engender an ethos under which bullying is unacceptable. All who are identified as leaders within the institution community can ensure that practical steps are taken to challenge and respond to bullying. Institution's leaders should also involve both staff and learners in developing and implementing a vision of the institution where diversity is accepted and celebrated.
- 6.2.3 As learners model their behaviour on that of adults, Headteachers/ Directors and teachers have to be careful to act as good role-models and not misuse their authority. Moreover, they should be fair, firm, clear and consistent in their disciplinary measures.
- 6.2.4 The *Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers (May 2015)* from the Ministry makes explicit the values and standards expected of teachers in their daily work with learners.
- 6.2.5 The Code of Conduct for Primary/ Secondary Schools (2010) recognizes the responsibilities of key partners including parents vis-a-vis ensuring positive behavior of learners at the level of the institutions.

6.3 A Institution-wide approach

- 6.3.1 An institution-wide approach (involving institution's management, staff, parents and learners) to dealing with the problem of bullying behaviour is a key element of effective practice. Bullying behaviour affects not only those immediately involved. It can affect everyone in the classroom, in the institution and, ultimately, in the wider community.
- 6.3.2 A positive institution-wide attitude and involvement can assist considerably in countering bullying behaviour in the institutions. In addition to the role of management and staff, parents and learners have a role and responsibility in helping the institution to prevent and address institution-based bullying behaviour and to deal with any negative impact within institution of bullying behaviour that occurs elsewhere. Parents should also recognise that an educational institution that openly discusses bullying is acting positively and that they need to work with their institution to ensure there is a coherent, institution-wide approach to tackling the issue.

- 6.3.3 Bullying behaviour thrives in an atmosphere of uncertainty and secrecy in which the learner often feels a sense of hopelessness and futility against the power being exercised by the person engaged in bullying behaviour. A high degree of institution-wide vigilance and openness is important in ensuring that bullying behaviour can be adequately tackled.
- 6.3.4 The promotion of relevant home/institution/community links is important for all institutions in regard to countering bullying behaviour and should be encouraged as a normal part of the institution's effective operation. For example, bullying behaviour can often occur on the journey to and/or from institution. An anti-bullying institution policy should embrace, as appropriate, those members of the wider community who come directly in daily contact with learners. Institution's bus drivers, school traffic wardens and local shopkeepers could be encouraged to play a positive role in assisting institutions to counter bullying behaviour by reporting such behaviour to parents and/or to the institution as appropriate. Through such approaches, a network is formed.
- 6.3.5 In certain cases, however, it may be necessary for the institution to seek the assistance of other local persons and formal agencies such as social workers, community workers and community police.

6.4 Shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact

- 6.4.1 The institution must put in place appropriate systems to ensure that all relevant members of the institution's community have a shared understanding of what constitutes bullying behaviour as defined in [Section 2.1](#) of these procedures. The manner in which an institution will develop and communicate this shared understanding amongst its learners will depend on factors such as the age and maturity of the learners concerned.
- 6.4.2 The definition of bullying, the various types of bullying behaviour and the impacts of bullying as set out in Sections 2 and 3 of these procedures must be communicated and explained to the institution's community.

6.5 Implementation of education and prevention strategies including awareness raising

- 6.5.1 The prevention of bullying must be an integral part of the written anti-bullying policy of all educational institutions. Every institution must document in its anti-bullying policy the specific education and prevention strategies that the institution will implement. This must include documenting the measures being taken by the institution to explicitly

address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.

- 6.5.2 Effective practice includes prevention and awareness raising measures across all aspects of bullying and involves strategies to engage learners in addressing problems when they arise. In particular, such strategies need to build empathy, respect and resilience in learners.
- 6.5.3 As self-esteem is a major factor in determining behaviour, institutions should, through both their curricular and extra-curricular programmes, provide learners with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth.
- 6.5.4 Initiatives and programmes focused on developing learners' awareness and understanding of bullying, including its causes and effects, should deal explicitly with the issue of identity-based bullying and in particular homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- 6.5.5 Prevention and awareness raising measures must also deal explicitly with cyber-bullying. The best way to address cyber-bullying is to prevent it happening in the first place. Prevention and any awareness raising measures should focus on educating learners on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while on-line and also on developing a culture of reporting any concerns about cyber-bullying. The institutions-wide approach and the role of parents as outlined in Section 6.3 is of importance in this regard. The prevention and awareness raising measures should also take into account the scope for cyber-bullying to occur as a result of access to technology from within the institution.
- 6.5.6 An institution's approach to tackling and preventing bullying should take particular account of the needs of learners with disabilities or with Special Education Needs (SEN), should join up with other relevant school policies and supports and should ensure that all the services that provide for such learners work together. Approaches to decreasing the likelihood of bullying for learners with Special Education Needs (SEN) include improving inclusion, focusing on developing social skills, paying attention to key moments such as transitioning from primary to secondary and cultivating a good institution culture which has respect for all and helping one another as central.
- 6.5.7 An institution's prevention and awareness raising measures need to be appropriate to the type of bullying and take into account the age and gender of the learners involved. Each institution must work to raise the awareness of bullying so that all members of the institution community understand what bullying is and how the institution deals with bullying behaviour.
- 6.5.8 Educational institution's could for example choose to have a staff day on the subject of bullying complemented by an awareness day for learners and parents. An awareness day can help give the parents of a learner who is being bullied the confidence to approach the institution and also helps to send a clear message to the parents of a learner who is

engaged in bullying behaviour that they have a major responsibility in addressing their child's behaviour.

6.5.9 Teachers can influence attitudes to bullying behaviour in a positive manner through a range of curricular initiatives. There are a number of curriculum components and programmes which are particularly relevant to the prevention of bullying and the promotion of respect for diversity and inclusiveness. The Personal and Social Education and the Citizenship Education curriculum provide the scope for exploring bullying as well as the inter-related areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships. The Health Promoting School Programme should also provide the scope for addressing issue of bullying.

6.5.10 There is also space within the teaching of all subjects 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 behavior in line with the following principles of our education system.

6.6 Effective supervision and monitoring of learners

6.6.1 It is the responsibility of the institution's management in conjunction with staff and learners to develop a system under which good supervisory and monitoring measures are in place both to prevent and deal with bullying behaviour. Good supervision and monitoring systems also facilitate early intervention. Such measures might include appropriate supervision of the institution's activities on a rota basis. The identification of "hot-spots" and "hot-times" can be very beneficial in preventing and dealing with bullying in institutions. All learners and in particular senior learners can be seen as a resource to assist in countering bullying. Student councils, where applicable, and other institutions clubs and societies can also be very important in this regard. Non-teaching staff should also contribute and be part of the process to counter bullying behaviour in institutions. In addition, strategies and measures need to be developed to involve all parents.

6.6.2 The institution's anti-bullying Operational Guidelines must confirm that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour.

6.7 Support for staff

6.7.1 The School Councils/ Professional Centre Boards must ensure that members of institution's staff have sufficient familiarity with the institution's Anti Bullying Operational Procedures and Guidelines to enable them to effectively and consistently apply them when required. Support for staff should be appropriate to the individual's

role and should enable staff members to recognise bullying, implement effective strategies for preventing bullying and where appropriate, intervene effectively in bullying cases.

- 6.7.2 The School Councils/ Professional Centre Boards and Leadership Team of the institutions must also make appropriate arrangements to ensure that temporary and substitute staff have sufficient awareness of the institution's code of behaviour and its anti-bullying Operational Procedures and Guidelines.

6.8 Consistent investigation, follow up and recording of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies)

- 6.8.1 A consistent and clear approach to dealing with bullying when it occurs is essential to effective practice. This section provides guidance and direction for institution in relation to the need to use established intervention strategies and ensuring consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour.
- 6.8.2 A learner or parent may bring a bullying concern to any teacher in the institution. Individual teachers must take appropriate measures regarding reports of bullying behaviour in accordance with the institution's Anti-Bullying Operational Procedures and Guidelines.
- 6.8.3 In these Operational Procedures and Guidelines, the member of teaching staff who has responsibility for investigating and dealing with bullying is referred to as the "relevant person". At primary level, the relevant teacher will normally be the class teacher. At secondary and Professional Centre institution levels, the institution will determine, having regard to its own circumstances, which members of teaching staff have this responsibility.
- 6.8.4 The institution's Anti-Bullying Operational Procedures and Guidelines must clearly indicate the relevant persons/ lecturers in its institution undertaking this responsibility.

Established intervention strategies

- 6.8.5 It is important for institution to identify and consistently implement established evidence-based intervention strategies for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour and preventing its continuation.
- 6.8.6 There are various approaches and intervention strategies that might be used by institutions. Given the complexity of bullying behaviour it is generally acknowledged that no one intervention works in all situations. International and national research also continues to evolve in this area and the effectiveness of particular approaches continues to be reviewed.

- 6.8.7 Each institution must therefore decide on the intervention method(s) that are best suited to its own circumstances. In identifying the most suitable intervention method(s) for a particular institution, it is important to research and understand both the techniques of intervention involved and the assumptions and rationale of particular methods.
- 6.8.8 To ensure clarity among the entire institution's community about how bullying cases will be dealt with, the method(s) of intervention that will be used by the institution must be specified in the institution's Anti-Bullying Operational Procedures and Guidelines.

Procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying

- 6.8.9 Educational institution's authorities must ensure that the institution has clear procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying and that these are set out in the institution's anti-bullying policy. The institution's procedures must be consistent with the following:
- i. The primary aim for the relevant person in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame);
 - ii. In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher/ lecturer will exercise his/her professional judgment to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
 - iii. All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant person/teacher/ lecturer. In that way learners will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all learners that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly;
 - iv. Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, bus drivers, cleaners, etc... must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant person/teacher/ lecturers;
 - v. Parents and learners are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the institution in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible;
 - vi. It is very important that all involved (including each set of learners and parents) understand the above approach from the outset;

- vii. Teachers/ lecturer should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by learners, staff or parents;
- viii. Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
- ix. All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all learners concerned. Learners who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way;
- x. When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant person/teacher/ lecturer 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;
- xi. 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;
- xii. Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face them from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher;
- xiii. It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s);
- xiv. In cases where it has been determined by the relevant person/teacher/ lecturer that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by referencing to the institution's Operational Procedures and Guidelines). The institution should give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the institution and the supports for their children;
- xv. Where the relevant person/teacher/ lecturer has determined that a learner has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the institution's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the learner being bullied;

- xvi. It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of learners and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the learner being disciplined, his or her parents and the institution;
- xvii. 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 learner who has been bullied is ready and agreeable. This can have a therapeutic effect;
- xviii. In cases where the relevant person/teacher/ lecturer considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded by the relevant person/teacher/ lecturer in the recording template at **Appendix 3** (See Section 6.8.10 (iii));
- xix. In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant person/teacher/ lecturer 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 the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable; and
 - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Headteacher/ Director or Deputy;
- xx. Where a parent is not satisfied that the institution has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents must be referred, as appropriate, to the institution's complaints procedures;
- xxi. In the event that a parent has exhausted the institution's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the institution must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Principal Secretary – Education Department.

Procedures for recording bullying behaviour

6.8.10 The School Councils/Professional Centres Boards must ensure that the institution has clear procedures for the formal noting and reporting of bullying behaviour and these must be documented in the institution's Anti-Bullying Operational Procedures and Guidelines. All records must be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection guidelines. The institution's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour must adhere to the following:

- i. While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant person/teacher/ lecturer, the relevant teacher/ lecturer 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 regarding same;
- ii. If it is established by the relevant person/teacher/ lecturer that bullying has occurred, the relevant person/ teacher/ lecturer 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.
- iii. The relevant person/teacher/ lecturer must use the recording template at **Appendix 3** to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:
 - a) in cases where he/she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred; and
 - b) where the institution has decided as part of its Anti-Bullying Operational Procedures and Guidelines that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Headteacher/ Director or Deputy as applicable.

In each of the circumstances at (a) and (b) above, the recording template at **Appendix 3** must be completed in full and retained by the person/teacher/ lecturer in question and a copy provided to the Headteacher/ Director or Deputy as applicable. It should also be noted that the timeline for recording bullying behaviour in the recording template at **Appendix 3** does not in any way preclude the relevant person/teacher/ lecturer from consulting the Headteacher/ Director or Deputy at an earlier stage in relation to a case.

Bullying as part of a continuum of behaviour

- 6.8.11 It is also important to note that bullying behaviour can be part of a continuum of behaviour rather than a stand-alone issue and in some cases behaviour may escalate beyond that which can be described as bullying to serious physical or sexual assault or harassment. To ensure that any such cases are dealt with appropriately, the institution's anti-bullying procedures and guidelines must provide for appropriate linkages with the overall code of behaviour and provide for referral to be made to relevant external agencies and authorities where appropriate. In cases where an institution has serious concerns in relation to managing the behaviour of a learner, the advice of the relevant sections of the School Division and other relevant external bodies should be sought **(Appendix 5)**

Referral of serious cases to the Relevant Section of Schools Division/ External Authorities

- 6.8.12 In relation to bullying in institutions, where "the incident is serious, and where the behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive, the institution must seek the assistance of the relevant sections of Schools Division and/ or other relevant external bodies with a view to drawing up an appropriate response, such as a management plan".

Supports for learners affected by bullying

- 6.8.13 A programme of support for learners who have been bullied must be in place. Such learners may need counselling and/or opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed.
- 6.8.14 A programme of support for those learners involved in bullying behaviour must also be part of the institution's intervention process. Learners involved in bullying behaviour need assistance on an ongoing basis. For those with low self-esteem, opportunities should be developed to increase feelings of self-worth. It is, therefore, important that the learning strategies applied within the institution allow for the enhancement of the learner's self-worth. Learners who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.
- 6.8.15 Learners who observe incidents of bullying behaviour should be encouraged to discuss them with teachers/ lecturer.
- 6.8.16 Details of the institution's programme for working with learners affected by bullying must be set out in the institution's anti-bullying policy.

6.9 Ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the Anti- Bullying Operational Procedures and Guidelines

- 6.9.1 The effectiveness of the institution's Anti-Bullying Operational Procedures and Guidelines should be subject to continuous review in the light of incidents of bullying behaviour encountered. The institution should make provision for periodic examination of the prevention and intervention strategies in place. Surveys of learners, staff and parents can, if properly conducted, provide important information about the effectiveness of the anti-bullying measures in place and identify any significant behavioural trends that may benefit from early intervention.
- 6.9.2 The template in **Appendix 3** for recording and reporting bullying to the institution Headteachers/ Directors or Deputy will be a valuable and readily accessible source of data in relation to bullying behaviour in the institution. Data gathered from these reports must be regularly (at least once in every year) collated and analysed with a view to monitoring levels of bullying behaviour and identifying any particular issues that require attention or any significant trends in behaviour. A record of this analysis must be retained and be made available to the School Councils/ Professional Boards. Appropriate responses to any issues identified should be drawn up and implemented.
- 6.9.3 It is recommended that the implementation and effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Operational Procedures and Guidelines be included as an agenda item for staff meetings so as to ensure that concerns about the Procedures and Guidelines or the welfare of individual learners can be shared and effectively addressed.

SECTION SEVEN: OVERSIGHT AND MONITORING

7.1 Periodic summary reports to the School Councils / Professional Centre Boards

- 7.1.1 At least once in every institution term, the Headteachers/ Directors must provide a report to the School Councils/ Professional Centres Board setting out:
- i. the overall number of bullying cases reported (by means of the bullying recording template at **Appendix 3**) since the previous report to the Council /Board and
 - ii. confirmation that all cases referred to at (i) above have been or are being, dealt with in accordance with the institution's Anti-Bullying Operational Procedures and Guidelines and the *National Anti-Bullying Policy and Strategy for Primary , Secondary Schools, and Professional Centres*.
- 7.1.2 The minutes of the School Councils/ Professional Centres Board meeting must record the above but in doing so must not include any identifying details of the learners involved.

7.2 Annual Review by the School Councils/ Professional Centre Boards

- 7.2.1 The School Councils/ Professional Centre Boards must undertake an annual review of the institution's Anti-Bullying Operational Procedures and Guidelines and its implementation by the institution.
- 7.2.2 A standardised checklist to be used in undertaking the review is included in **Appendix 4** to these procedures. It should be noted that 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 institution's Anti-Bullying Operational Procedures and Guidelines will be required.
- 7.2.3 The institution must put in place an action plan together with its partners to address any areas for improvement identified by the review.
- 7.2.4 Written notification that the review has been completed must be made available to institution's personnel, published on the institution's website (where it exists) be readily accessible to parents and learners on request) (where one exists). A standardised notification which must be used for this purpose is included at **Appendix 4**. A record of the review and its outcome must be made and submitted to the Principal Secretaries of the Ministry.

SECTION EIGHT: APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Template Anti-Bullying Operational Procedures and Guidelines

All sections of this template must be completed

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education Act 2004 and the Code of Conduct for primary/ secondary schools (2010) and the National Anti-Bullying Policy and Strategy (2017) issued by the Ministry, the School Councils/Professional Centres/ of _____ institution has adopted the following Anti-Bullying Operational Procedures and Guidelines within the framework of the institution's overall code of behaviour.

The Operational Procedures and Guidelines fully complies with the requirements of the *National Anti-Bullying Policy and Strategy for Primary, Secondary and Professional Centres* published in April 2017.

2. The School Council/ Professional Centre Board recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of learners and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:
 - A positive education institution culture and climate which-
 - is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
 - encourages learners to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
 - promotes respectful relationships across the institution's community;
 - Effective leadership;
 - An insitution-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 learners; and
 - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
 - Effective supervision and monitoring of learners;
 - Support 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. In accordance with the *National Anti-Bullying Policy and Strategy for Primary, Secondary Schools and Professional Centres* (September 2017) bullying is defined as follows:

Bullying is unwanted negative and harmful 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 a minority group 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 institution'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 institution's code of behaviour.

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the *National Anti-Bullying Policy and Strategy for Primary, Secondary Schools and Professional Centres* (September 2017).

4. The relevant person/teacher(s)/ lecturer (s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows: (see Section 6.8 of the *National Anti-Bullying Operational Policy and Strategy for Primary Secondary Schools and Professional Centres*) (September 2017):

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 institution are as follows (see Section 6.5 of the *National Anti-Bullying Policy and Strategy for Primary, Secondary and Professional Centres*) (September 2017)::

6. The institution's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the institution's for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows (see Section 6.8 of the *National Anti-Bullying Policy and Strategy for Primary, Secondary and Professional Centres*) (September 2017)

7. The institution's programme of support for working with learners affected by bullying is as follows (see Section 6.8 of the *National Anti-Bullying Policy and Strategy for Primary, Secondary Schools and Professional Centres*) (September 2017): :

8. Supervision and Monitoring of Learners

The School Council/ Professional Centre Board 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 School Council/ Professional Centre Board confirms that the institution will, in accordance with its obligations under relevant national legislations, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of learners or staff or the harassment of learners or staff on any of the grounds specified in such legislations.

10. This Operational Procedures and Guidelines was adopted by the School Council/ Professional Centre Board on _____ [date].
11. This Operational Procedures and Guidelines has been made available to institution's personnel, published on the institution's website (if it exists), is readily accessible to parents and learners on request). A copy of this Operational Procedures and Guidelines will be made available to relevant authorities of the two Departments.

- 12.** This Operational Procedures and Guidelines and its implementation will be reviewed by the School Council/ Professional Centre Board once in every school year.

Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to the institution's personnel, published on the institution's website (if it exists), be readily accessible to parents and learners on request). A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, to the relevant authorities of the two Departments of the Ministry.

Signed: _____

(Chairperson of School Council/Professional Centre Board)

Date: _____

Signed: _____

(Headteacher/ Director)

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____

Signed: _____

Principal Secretary - ECPSE / TEHRD

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 institution's culture and climate and to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour.

- Model respectful behaviour to all members of the institution's community at all times.
- Explicitly teach learners 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 institution. Involve learners 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 institution – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of learners with a disability or Special Education Needs.
- Give constructive feedback to learners when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the institution's rules and routines.
- Explicitly teach learners about the appropriate use of social media.
- Positively encourage learners to comply with the institution rules on mobile phone and internet use. Follow up and follow through with learners who ignore the rules.
- Actively involve parents and/or the School Council/Professional Centre Board in awareness raising campaigns around social media.
- Actively promote the right of every member of the institution community to be safe and secure in institution.
- Highlight and explicitly teach institution rules in learners' friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.
- All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.

- Implement Programmes for enhancing the Socio-Emotional Development Skills of Learners
- Ensure there is adequate playground/ yard/outdoor supervision.
- Establish Student Support Groups.
- Institutions staff can get learners to help them to identify bullying “hot spots” and “hot times” for bullying in the institution.
- Hot spots tend to be in the playground/ 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 learners are in the playground/ yard or moving classrooms.
- Support the establishment and work of School Council/ Professional Centre Board.

Appendix 3 Template for Reporting/ Documenting Bullying Behaviour on the Premises.

1.0 School/Professional Centre _____

2.0 Category Name of Source and Date of Reporting the Bullying Behaviour

Category	Name	Date
2.1 Student		
2.2 Parent or Guardian of the Student		
2.3 Close Relative of the Student		
2.4 School Staff		
2.5 Bystander		
2.6 Others (Specify)		

3.0 Incident Information

3.1 Name and Class of Student Bullied

3.2 Name and Class of Bullies Identified

4.0 Nature/ Category of Bullying Behaviour Observed/ Being Reported (Tick appropriately)

4.1 Physical – Acts such as hitting, spitting, kicking or damaging one’s possessions	
4.2 Verbal – Acts such as malicious gossip, name calling, intimidation	
4.3 Social – Acts such as isolation or exclusion from group, spreading rumors or lies on someone, identify focus.	
4.4 Cyberbullying – Acts through website, cell phone, social media or text messages.	
4.5 Others (Specify) _____	

Other (s): _____

Where the Bullying Behaviour is regarded as Identify – Focus, indicate the relevant Category.

Homophobic	
Disability – Related	
Racist	
Belonging to a Minority Culture	
Others (Specify)	

5.0 Location of the Bullying Behaviour/Incident (Tick appropriately)

5.1 Playground	
5.2 Classroom	
5.3 Staircase	
5.4 Corridor	
5.5 Toilets	
5.6 School Bus	
5.7 Others (Specify) _____	

6.0 Time of the Bullying Behaviour (Tick appropriately)

6.1 Before School	
6.2 In Class	
6.3 In-Between Classes	
6.4 Lunch - Time	
6.5 After School	
6.6 Via Internet (off School premises)	
6.7 Via Internet (from School premises)	
6.8 Others (Specify) _____	

Others: _____

7.0 Summary Description of the Bullying Behaviour and its Impact

8.0 Summary of Follow-Up Action(s) Taken (Including Agencies/ Organisations from which support was sought.

9.0 Summary of Outcome to the Case/ Incident to date

10.0 Name and Designation of Person Completing the Form and Date of Completion

Name: _____ Designation: _____

Date: _____

11.0 Date Submitted to Headteacher/Director or Deputy: _____

Appendix 4: Checklist for Annual Review of the Anti-Bullying Operational Procedures and Guidelines and its Implementation

The School Councils/ Professional Centre Boards must undertake an annual review of the institution's Anti-Bullying Operational Procedures and Guidelines 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 institution's Anti-Bullying Operational Procedures and Guidelines will be required.

	Yes/ No
1) Has the School Councils/ Professional Centre Board formally adopted an Anti-Bullying Operational Procedures and Guidelines that fully complies with the requirements of the <i>National Anti-Bullying Policy and Strategy for Primary, Secondary and Professional Centres (September 2017)</i>	
2) Has the School Council/ Professional Centre Board published the Operational Procedures and Guidelines on the institution's website and provided a copy to the parents'?	
3) Has the School Council/ Professional Centre Board ensured that the Operational Procedures and Guidelines has been made available to institution's staff (including new staff)?	
4) Is the School Council/ Professional Centre Board satisfied that institution staff are sufficiently familiar with the Operational Procedures and Guidelines to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy and procedures in their day to day work?	
5) Has the School Council/ Professional Centre Board ensured that the Anti-Bullying Operational Procedures and Guidelines has been adequately communicated to all learners?	
6) Has the Operational Procedures and Guidelines documented the prevention and education strategies that the institution applies?	
7) Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	
8) Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	
9) Is the School Council/ Professional Centre Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the Operational Procedures and Guidelines?	
10) Has the School Council/ Professional Centre Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Headteacher/ Director?	
11) Has the School Council/ Professional Centre Board discussed how well the institution is handling all reports of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and not therefore included in the Headteacher's / Director's periodic report to the Board?	

	Yes/ No
12) Has the School Council/ Professional Centre Board received any complaints from parents regarding the institution's handling of bullying incidents?	
13) Have any parent withdrawn or official requested transfer their child from the institution citing dissatisfaction with the institution's handling of a bullying situation?	
14) Have any 'Higher Authority' investigations into the institution's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	
15) Has the data available from cases reported to the Headteacher/ Director (by the bullying recording template) been analysed to identify any issues, trends or patterns in bullying behaviour?	
16) Has the School Council/ Professional Centre Board identified any aspects of the institution's Operational Procedures and Guidelines and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	
17) Has the School Council/ Professional Centre Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	
18) Has the Student Support Group against Bullying been established?	
19) Is the Programme for Emotional Development Skills for Learners in place?	

Signed _____
Chairperson, School Councils/Professional Centre Board

Date _____

Signed _____
Headteacher/ Director

Date _____

Notification Regarding the Institution’s Management’s Annual Review of the Anti-Bullying Operational Procedures and Guidelines

To: _____

The School Councils/ Professional Centre Board of _____ wishes to inform you that:

- The School Council/ Professional Centre Board annual review of the institution’s Anti-Bullying Operational Procedures and Guidelines and its implementation was completed at the School Council/ Professional Centre Board meeting of _____ [date].
- This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in **Appendix 4** of the Ministry’s *National Anti-Bullying Policy and Strategy for Primary, Secondary and Professional Centres (September 2017)*

Signed _____

Date _____

Chairperson, School Council/ Professional Centre Board

Signed _____

Date _____

Headteacher/ Director

Copy: Principal Secretaries - ECPSE and TEHRD

Appendix 5: Contact Details of Official Organisations and Agencies External to the Ministry Providing Assistance and Support with the Anti-Bullying Agenda

1. Ministry of Local Government	4297400
2. Ministry of Family Affairs	4281500
3. Department of Social Affairs	4281500
4. Department of Youth and Sports	4325555
5. National Council for Children (NCC):	4284390
6. Agency for Social Protection:	4293500
7. Office of the President Secretary of State- Prevention of Drug Abuse & Rehabilitation Dr. Patrick Herminie	4295656
8. Seychelles Police: Mr Hendrick Leon Assistant Superintendent Child Protection Unit Hendrick leon@hotmail.com	4288000
9. Seychelles National Youth Council (SNYC) Mrs. Beryl Dodin National Youth Center, English River bdodin@snyc.gov.sc	Mobile: 2724168 Office: 4611356/50
10. Children Helpline:	4322626
11. Stand Up Step Up Chairperson: Trevor Louise	2645658
12. SIFCO	4322652
13. Citizen’s Engagement Platform Seychelles (CEPS) Room 208, 2nd Floor, Orion Mall, Victoria, Mahe Info@ceps.sc	4325550/52