

Anti-Bullying Policy

ST. PATRICK'S N.S.

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of St. Patrick's N.S. has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall Code of Behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* which were published in September 2013. While the Board recognises its obligations, not only to the children, but also to the staff working in the school, this policy hereafter deals exclusively with bullying within the student body. School policy and procedures relating to adult bullying is outlined in the school's Code of Behaviour.
2. The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:
 - A positive school culture and climate which-
 - is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
 - encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment;
 - promotes respectful relationships across the school community;
 - Effective leadership;
 - A school-wide approach;
 - A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
 - Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that-
 - build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
 - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
 - Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
 - Supports for staff;
 - Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
 - On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

3. *Defining Bullying*

In accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* bullying is defined as follows:

Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted, by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
- cyber-bullying and

- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

4. Relevant Teacher(s)

The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:

- Class teacher(s)
- Principal

However, it is acknowledged that management, staff, parents and pupils have a role and responsibility in helping the school to prevent and address school-based bullying behaviour, and to deal with any negative impact within school of bullying behaviour that occurs elsewhere. Teachers and ancillary staff will report any incidents witnessed by them, reported or mentioned to them, to the relevant class teacher(s).

5. Education and Prevention Strategies

The education and prevention strategies that will be used by the school are as follows:

The right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school will provide the framework against which all school activities take place. As such the following strategies will permeate the work of all staff on a daily basis:

- Explicitly teaching respectful behaviour and language
- Creating a school culture which celebrates difference and diversity, and is inclusive in nature
- Noticing and acknowledging desired respectful behaviour with positive attention
- Displaying key respect messages in classrooms, in hallways and around the school
- Highlighting school rules in pupil friendly language in classrooms
- Modelling respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times
- Being actively vigilant for signs of bullying behaviour

- Creating a culture of telling by encouraging pupils to “tell and keep telling” in line with Stay Safe message
- Ensuring that all staff and pupils adhere to the school’s Acceptable Use Policy when using ICT
- Extra vigilance will be applied to protect vulnerable children, particularly those with special needs who may not have the language/skills to report that they are being bullied.

Curricular Provision

The Social Personal and Health Education curriculum makes specific provision towards preventing bullying through exploration of the topic, as well as the inter-related areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships. The SPHE programme seeks to build empathy, respect, resilience and foster a positive sense of self-worth in our pupils. The resource teacher may work with the class teacher when it is deemed appropriate. Teachers will use some/all of the following programmes and resources in covering this curricular area.

- Stay Safe Programme
- Relationships and Sexuality Education Programme
- Walk Tall Substance Abuse Prevention Programme
- Stop Think Do Programme
- Social Stories
- Prim Ed E Books on Cyberbullying
- Webwise
- Circle Time
- Guest Speakers
- Bullying in a Cyberworld (Prim-Ed. –Early Years, Lower, Middle & Upper)
- Bullying Photocopiable Resources (Prim-Ed.)

In many instances, the approach will be cross- curricular as the children explore the relevant topics through art, music, drama, religious education, physical education etc. Pupils will also learn about acceptable use of ICT in their use of technology across a range of curricular areas.

Extra-Curricular

Many aspects of the SPHE curriculum can be supported by the schools extra-curricular programme. Extra-curricular activities build self-esteem and positive self-worth, promote teamwork, provide opportunities for dealing with aggression, foster conflict resolution skills and develop resilience in our pupils. St. Patrick’s N.S. offers a diverse range of extra-curricular activities (sporting activities, music activities, drama, quiz teams, science workshops etc.) to this end.

Continuous Professional Development

Staff will be supported in availing of CPD relating to-

- SPHE curriculum
- ICT, to foster an awareness and knowledge of cyberbullying, current trending etc.

6. Procedures for investigation, follow-up and Recording

The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:

- Teachers on yard record noteworthy incidents in the relevant notebook. The teacher will use his/her professional judgement to determine those incidents which are noteworthy. These incidents will also be reported to the class teacher(s)
- Class teacher will keep their own written record of significant incidents involving children in their own class

- All reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher(s)
- From the outset, victims should be reassured that they are not to blame. Children who report incidents of bullying should be affirmed, and reassured that they are acting responsibly.
- If a teacher(s) suspects or receives a report that bullying may have/has taken place, he/she will gather all information from both sides. The teacher shall take a calm, unemotional, problem-solving approach, and conduct all investigations with sensitivity and due regard for the rights of all parties concerned. Some/all of these strategies may be utilised at the teacher's discretion
 - Interview in class
 - Interview outside of class
 - Individual interview
 - Group interview
 - Gleaning information from witnesses as to what occurred
 - Getting children to write/draw what happened
- Following investigation, the teacher will determine if bullying has taken place, and if so, what type. If he/she determines that bullying has occurred, he/she will refer the matter to the Principal at the earliest opportunity. If the teacher determines that an isolated incident which cannot be quantified as bullying has taken place, he/she will record the incident in their personal notes and continue to monitor the situation.

- On receiving a report of bullying, (Appendix 2) the Principal will again interview parties to ensure that a complete picture of events has been established. Pupil will be informed that their behaviour is in breach of the schools anti-bullying policy.
- Principal will contact parents of parties involved at an early stage to inform them that a breach of the schools anti-bullying policy has taken place. They will be informed as to what has taken place and explained the actions being taken. (Sanctions may include time off the yard, loss of privilege, suspension.) Parents will be given an opportunity to discuss ways in which they can reinforce the schools actions at home.
- Following the imposition of appropriate sanction(s), the class teacher monitors closely the relationships of all involved. The restoration of relationships is the ultimate goal.

Queries

- In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, this must be recorded in section 9 of the template for recording bullying. The teacher should take the following factors into account
 - Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased
 - Whether relationships between parties have been resolved as far as is practicable
 - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the Principal/Deputy Principal
- Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents must be referred to the schools complaints procedures.
- In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the ombudsman.

Recording and Reporting

- While all reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with, the teacher will keep his/her own records of incidents which are not considered to be bullying as defined section 3 of this policy.
- Where bullying has taken place, the relevant teacher must record bullying behaviours in the appropriate template (Appendix 2). This document must be given to the Principal, and retained in the appropriate file in the Principal's office. All records must be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation.
- At least once every school term, the Principal will report to the Board of Management
 - The overall number of bullying cases reported by means of the bullying recording template since the previous report to the Board

- Confirmation that all of these cases have been, or are being, dealt with in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy and the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

The minutes of the Board of Management meeting must record the above without including any identifying details of parties involved.

7. School's Programme of Support

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:

- All staff will be informed of any bullying incidents to ensure increased vigilance in supervision at break-times, before/after school etc.
- The class teacher(s) will monitor the situation closely in the aftermath of a bullying incident, ensuring that supports are in place to help all parties, ultimately seeking the rebuilding of relationships
- Where appropriate, specifically targeted lessons may be taught in class, with due sensitivity towards the children involved
- Follow-up meetings may be arranged after a certain time period to ensure that the issue has been fully resolved
- Some children may require a programme of intervention following the staged approach – class support, school support, school support plus. Where class support and school support have not resolved the difficulties, the school may refer the child to the National Educational Psychological Services or make a clinical referral.
- In certain cases it may be necessary/helpful to make parents aware of other support services to assist the child who has bullied or the child who has been bullied e.g. counselling (Appendix 5)

8. Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

9. Prevention of Harassment

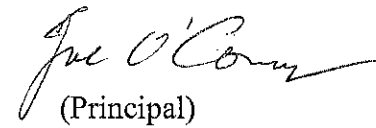
The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of pupils or staff on any of the nine grounds specified i.e. gender including transgender, civil status,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

- 10.** This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 8/04/2014.
This policy was reviewed and adopted by the BoM on 28/09/2021

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parent Teachers Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

12. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year using the standardised checklist provided by the DES (Appendix 3). The school must put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement identified by the review. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association (Appendix 4). A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: 
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: 
(Principal)

Date: 29 Sep 21

Date: 29-9-21

Date of next review no later than Sept 2023.

Appendix 1

Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate

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

- Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.
- Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.
- Catch them being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN.
- Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.
- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.
- Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use. Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.
- Actively involve parents and/or the Parent Teachers Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media.
- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.
- Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.
- All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- Ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.
- School staff can get pupils to help them to identify bullying “hot spots” and “hot times” for bullying in the school. Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas, changing rooms, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision. Hot times again tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when pupils are in the playground/school yard or moving classrooms.
- Support the establishment and work of student anti-bullying group.

Appendix 2– Template for recording bullying behaviour

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name _____ Class _____

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

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3. Source of bullying concern/report

4. Location of incidents

Pupil concerned		Playground	
Other Pupil		Classroom	
Parent		Corridor	
Teacher		Toilets	
Other		School Bus	
		Other	

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

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6. Type of Bullying Behaviour

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

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

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

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9. Details of actions taken

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Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher)

Date _____

_____ Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

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

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

	Yes /No
Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools</i> ?	
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	
Is the Board satisfied that school staff are sufficiently familiar with the policy and procedures to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy and procedures in their day to day work?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	
Has the Board discussed how well the school is handling all reports of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and not therefore included in the Principal's periodic report to the Board?	
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	
Has the data available from cases reported to the Principal (by the bullying recording template) been analysed to identify any issues, trends or patterns in bullying behaviour?	
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	

Signed _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date _____

Signed _____
Principal

Date _____

Appendix 4

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

To: _____

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

- The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of _____ [date].
- This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in **Appendix 4** of the Department's *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Signed _____ Date _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _____ Date _____
Principal

Appendix 5

Directory of Support Services

Anti-Bullying Centre	(01) 6082573
CAB – Campaign Against Bullying	(01) 2887976
Childline Freephone	1800 666660
Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy	(01) 2300061
ISPCC	(01) 6794944
The National Association for Parents Support (NAPS)	(0502) 20598
Parentline (Parents under Stress)	(01) 8733500
Samaritans (Callsave)	1850 609090
Sticks and Stones Theatre Company	(01) 2807065
Trinity College Dublin – Anti-Bullying Research Centre	(01) 6601011
Victim Support	1800 661771

Some Useful Websites

Bullying @ school information – www.scre.ac.uk/bully

Bullying information on Bullying Child/Parents/Teachers www.lfcc.on.ca/bully

Bullying in schools www.ericcece.org/pubs/digests/1997/banks97

What Parents should know about Bullying – www.accesseric.org/resources/parent/bully

Anti-Bullying Campaign Tools for Teachers - www.antibullyingcampaign.ie

Indicators which may suggest a pupil is being bullied.

Physical Indicators:

Unexplained bruising, cuts etc.

Loss of/ damage to personal property.

Hunger or thirst.

Frequent minor illnesses, headaches, tummy aches etc.

Bedwetting.

Loss of appetite.

Obsessive behaviour, physical appearance, weight etc.

Stammering.

Requests for extra money.

Emotional / Psychological Indicators:

Outbursts of anger, temper, irritability at home.

Bullying brother and sisters, parents.

Well behaved child suddenly troublesome.

Signs of depression

Changes in: mood ,appetite, sleep pattern.

Tiredness, neglect of appearance.

Expressions of sadness, worthlessness.

Nightmares, crying at night.

Restless, dangerous, wild, disruptive behaviour.

Cynicism, black mood.

Implied or overt threats of suicide.

School Related Indicators:

Reluctance to go, wanting to be accompanied

Returning in bad form

Changing route

Avoiding certain days/ lessons

Nervousness in class

Punctuality problems

Poor concentration

Deterioration in school work

Expressions of hopelessness

Fewer phone calls, friends calling, invitations

Reluctance to take part in activities

Abusive phone calls, texts, email

Non attendance

Practical Suggestions to Sexual Orientation Bullying

Depending on the context and the age group of the children, the teacher could ask a child or a class group what they mean by the word 'gay'.

In St. Patrick's teachers will respond to this question in an open and straight forward way in giving factual information such as 'The majority of people are attracted to people of the opposite sex. This is called being heterosexual. Some people are attracted to people of the same sex. This is called being homosexual or gay.'

Homophobic insults should be treated in exactly the same way as racist or other insults –

the teacher will calmly explain to the child/children that such insults are hurtful to the other person and not acceptable.

Key elements of a positive school culture and climate.

The school acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment.

The school acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual and his/her worth as a human being.

The school promotes positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among all its members.

The school prohibits vulgar, offensive, sectarian or other aggressive behaviour or language by any of its members.

The school has a clear commitment to promoting equity in general and gender equity in particular in all aspects of its functioning.

The school has the capacity to change in response to pupils' needs.

The school identifies aspects of curriculum through which positive and lasting influences can be exerted towards forming pupils' attitudes and values.

The school takes particular care of "at risk" pupils 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 school recognises the need to work in partnership with and keep parents informed on procedures to improve relationships on a school-wide basis.

The school recognises the role of other community agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying.

The school promotes habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the interdependence of people in groups and communities.

The school promotes qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among all its members both in and out of school.

Staff members share a collegiate responsibility, under the direction of the Principal, to act in preventing bullying/aggressive behaviour by any member of the school community.

