



Anti-bullying Policy

Revision No 3
Jan 2017

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. Joseph's Primary school has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* which were published in September 2013.
2. The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:
- 3 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;
 - and promotes respectful relationships across the school community;
- 4 Effective leadership;
- 5 A school-wide approach;
- 6 A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
- 7 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 homophobic and racist bullying and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.
- 8 Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
- 9 Supports for staff;
- 9 Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
- 10 On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

1. 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, video image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

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

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

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

Class teacher /teacher who is supervising/ Principal

- The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including homophobic and racist bullying and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

3.) that will be used by the school are as follows (see Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

- **SPHE, RSE and Stay Safe, Walk Tall** Programmes
- **Alive O, Grow in Love** Religion Programme
- **'Bullying'**-Prim Ed Supplementary material (as required)
- **'Let's Try'** building a climate of positive behaviour in the whole school through a particular task (each fortnight) i.e Say Hello/ Good Morning
Please/Thank You
Excuse Me/ Stand back for an adult
Say sorry/
- This task is highlighted each day in the School News, and it is on a Notice in the School Hall
- Highlighting the difference between 'Bad Behaviour' and Bullying and how we can 'Say Sorry' and be friends again.
- **Catching pupils being good.** This can happen in the classroom or the playground.
 - on the playground when they are playing fairly
 - when they play with someone who has no one to play with
 - when they share with other children
 - when they are kind
- **'FRIENDS for Life'** Senior pupils have a course Friends for Life in SPHE. **'FRIENDS for Life'** is a skills based training programme which is designed to help children cope with feelings of fear, worry and sadness by building emotional resilience and self-esteem.
 - Information session for parents on Bullying by a Psychologist
 - **Fun Friends** programme for first class.



- **Cyber Bullying** The school liaison Garda visits the school to talk to Fifth and Sixth Class pupils on Cyber Bullying

- Websites on Bullying <http://www.brainpopjr.com/health/relationships/bullying/>, www.webwise.ie, www.antibullyingcampaign.ie

- Friendship Week/Day

- Posters displayed throughout the school

4. The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*) :

Stage One

Unless the incident is of a very serious nature, it will be dealt with by the classroom teacher who will talk to the children involved. Teachers respect the need to support the esteem of each party involved in an incident. When a teacher becomes aware that a child (or a group) is regularly involved in incidents he/she will start a record of such incidents. The purpose of this record is:

- To aid memory by recording details of the incident
- For clarity in assessment of the situation
- For planning and intervention

Should the action taken at this stage prove not to have resolved the issue, the staff will proceed to stage two.

Stage Two

1. If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually by the class teacher and Principal and then the individuals are met as a group. Each member will be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone is aware of what everyone has said.

If it is an individual pupil is involved, the same procedure applies.

2. If it is concluded that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the Code of Behaviour and Discipline and try to get him/her to see the situation from the victim's point of view. It will be expected that an apology will be made to the victim either verbal or written and a promise undertaken not to engage in bullying behaviour again.

3. In cases where it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, a meeting or discussion will take place with the parents or guardians of the two parties involved as appropriate to:

- a) explain the actions being taken and the reasons for them, referring them to the school policy
- b) discuss ways in which they can reinforce and support the actions taken by the school.

The teacher starts a journal with the pupil. In it all positive behaviour, progress on work etc will be noted. At the end of the day, the teacher writes her own comment. The purpose of this report to focus as much as possible on the positive qualities and efforts of the pupil, and to motivate the child to move away from negative behaviour. Parents sign this notebook. The child sees that parents and school are working together in his/her interest, so the co-operation of the parents is essential. Initially a review of the reports will be carried out on a weekly basis. If progress is being made, longer intervals between meetings may be decided upon. The child who is the victim of bullying will also meet with the Principal and his/her parents. The aim of such a meeting(s) will be to address emotional needs and devise strategies for the child to deal with the bullying. This may involve reinforcing the programme being covered in class, or other strategies.



Stage Three

It is the duty of the school to provide a safe environment for all the children. Should the above interventions fail and the bullying continue, a programme of appropriate sanctions may be implemented by the Principal in consultation with the parents and Board of Management. Sanctions implemented aim to encourage positive behaviour and support the esteem of the child. These sanctions may include a period of suspension during which there will be ongoing consultation with the parents to decide on appropriate action(s) to be taken in the best interests of the child. Suspension for any period of time will be reported in writing by the Principal to the Chair of the Board of Management.

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

Meeting with the parents of the pupils

Record with the pupil/teacher/home. The pupil can record how they got on in school, the teacher can add a comment and the parent signs this. This is done on a daily basis as required.

Building up the self esteem of the pupil, so that they feel that they will be able to disclose if they feel bullied again.

Follow up meetings with parents.

If other external support is needed for the pupil, the school will advise parents about possible options.

The school's anti bullying programme also includes a programme of support for pupils involved in bullying behaviour, There are opportunities to take part in social skills groups where they learn to meet their needs without violating the needs of others. Class teachers can also use opportunities to promote self-esteem and develop feelings of self worth.

6. 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.

7. Prevention of Harassment

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

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

The Board of Management of St. Joseph's Primary School shall regularly revise this policy.

Signed on behalf of the Board of Management

Chairperson:

Date: