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## **Anti- Bullying Policy. St. Joseph's Primary School.**

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the National Educational Welfare Board (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:
  - 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;
  - 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 eg. Friendship Week/Buddy Days etc.) 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;
  - Participation in Incredible Years, National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) & MAPA by various staff members.
  - 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. 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 (one incidence online is considered cyber bullying)
- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

Isolated or once-off incidents, with the exception of cyber bullying, of intentional negative behaviour, do not fall within the definition of bullying and will 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 eg. Viber, WhatsApp, Snapchat, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram (this list is not exhaustive).

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- Dept. of Education and Skills 2013*.

A pupil/parent may bring a bullying incident/concern to any teacher in the school.

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is as follows: (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*): However, the Class teacher will more often than not be the relevant teacher for investigating the bullying incident.
5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows :
- Initiatives and programmes focused on developing pupils' awareness and understanding of bullying, including its causes and effects, should deal explicitly with the issue of bullying, teaching SPHE, Stay Safe & RSE.
  - Friends for Life & Fun Friends are skills based training programmes which are designed to help children cope with feelings of fear, worry and sadness. These programmes aim to build

emotional resilience and self-esteem. These programmes are taught in Sixth class & Second class.

- Catching pupils being good. This can happen in the classroom or the playground.
- Cyber-Bullying – The school will focus on educating pupils on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while on-line and also on developing a culture of reporting any concerns about cyber-bullying. Liason with our Community Garda and other speakers will be arranged in this regard. See Acceptable Use Policy re use of technology in school.
- Our school’s approach to tackling and preventing bullying takes particular account of the needs of pupils with disabilities or with Special Educational Needs, joins up with other relevant school policies and supports and ensures that all the services that provide for such pupils work together. Our approaches to decreasing the likelihood of bullying for pupils with SEN include inclusion, focusing on developing social skills, paying attention to key moments such as transitioning from primary to post-primary and cultivating a good school culture which has respect for all and helping one another as central.
- Our school’s prevention and awareness raising measures to all types of bullying take into account the age and gender of the pupils involved. The school will work to raise the awareness of bullying so that all members of the school community understand what bullying is and how the school deals with bullying behaviour.
- As part of our prevention and awareness strategies the school has a Friendship Week, in February each year to promote positive pupil interaction.

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

Procedures for noting and reporting incidents of Bullying:-

- a. Incidents of bullying behaviour are reported to the Class Teacher by a child/children/parents.
- b. All incidents of bullying will be noted in a special Incidents Book, and relevant recording template. Incidents will be investigated and dealt with by members of Staff.
- c. Bullying behaviour by pupils will be referred immediately by the Class teacher to the Principal or Deputy-Principal.
- d. Parents/Guardians of all parties involved in the alleged bullying will be informed by the Principal or Deputy-Principal earlier rather than later and a plan of action discussed.
- e. It will be made clear to all pupils that reporting incidents of bullying is not “telling tales” but behaving responsibly. Pupils will be helped to handle the possible pressures that face them from others after reporting to or being questioned by the teacher.

Action to be taken when Bullying is suspected

- Procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying:-
- If bullying is suspected, we talk to the affected person(s), the pupil suspected of being responsible for the bullying behaviour and any witnesses. If any degree of bullying is reported or identified, the following action will be taken:-
- Teachers will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with reported incidents.
  - Incidents will be investigated outside the classroom situation.
  - The teachers will speak separately to the pupils involved.
  - All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned.
  - Answers will be sought to the questions what, where, when, who and why.
  - If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually.

- Teachers who are investigating cases of bullying behaviour will keep a written record of their discussions with those involved. (It may also be appropriate and helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s).)
- In cases where it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, meetings will be arranged with the parents/guardians of the victim(s) as well as with the parents/guardians of any pupil involved in the bullying behaviour (a) to explain the actions being taken and the reasons for them, referring them to the school policy, (b) to discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the procedures taken by the school.

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows: Help and support will be given as is appropriate to both the affected person(s) and the pupil(s) suspected of being responsible for the bullying behaviour.

#### **Support for the affected person(s)**

**A:** We support the **affected person(s)** in the following ways:

- by offering him/her an immediate opportunity to talk about the experience with his/her class teacher or another teacher.
- by informing the affected person(s) parents/guardians and suggesting how they might help.
- by offering continuing support in the form of:
  - regular follow-up (documented) discussions to check on progress/positive outcomes or to record further incidents of bullying behaviour.
  - assistance with social and/or emotional aspects of bullying (self-esteem issues, assertiveness skills, knowing how to respond when an incident occurs, exploring "how not to be an affected person(s)", etc)

#### **Support for Pupils involved in Bullying**

**B:** In addition to applying appropriate consequences/sanctions for the incident(s) of bullying behaviour, as per the School's Code of Behaviour (See appendix 1 attached), we also try to help any pupil involved in bullying in the following ways:

- by offering him/her an opportunity to talk about what happened, to discover why he/she became involved, to help him/her see the incident(s) from the affected person(s) perspective, to help him/her see the seriousness of the behaviour
- by informing his/her parents/guardians and suggesting how they might help
- by offering continuing support to the individual in the form of:
  - regular follow-up (documented) discussions to check on progress/positive outcomes, to offer positive feedback and encouragement if the bullying behaviour has ceased, and to discuss and develop a plan of action to address any subsequent incidents of bullying behaviour if applicable
  - assistance with social and/or emotional aspects of bullying (self-esteem issues, emotional empathy, popularity issues, etc.)

8. Supervision and monitoring of pupils.

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

#### **9. Prevention of Harassment**

The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of pupils or staff or the harassment of pupils or staff on any of the nine

grounds specified i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

10. This policy will be presented to the Board of Management in February 2020 for discussion with a view to ratification.
  
11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and is readily accessible to parents and pupils on request from the School Office. A copy is also provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.
  
12. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and is readily accessible to parents and pupils on request from the School Office and a copy will be provided to the Parents' Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department of Education and Skills.
  
13. This policy was reviewed on \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal)

Date: