

### Anti-bullying policy

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 School will be adopting 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;
    - 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. 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 (this is not an exhaustive list):

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying such as
  - Name calling
  - Intimidation
  - Extortion
  - Isolation / exclusion
  - Abusive Telephone Calls
  - Malicious rumour
  - Taunting / Attempting to embarrass or humiliate
  - Physical aggression
  - Damage to property
  - Bullying of school personnel.
- cyber-bullying including (but not limited) to the following:
  - Text message bullying –
  - Taking, sending and publication of photographs or video clips via mobile phone cameras –
  - Phone call bullying –
  - Email bullying –
  - Chat room bullying –
  - Bullying through instant messaging
  - Bullying via websites (social networking sites)
- 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.

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

#### Where can Bullying happen?

Bullying can take place:

- in school
- on the way to and from school
- at activities outside school
- at home or attending a birthday party or playdate
- via mobile phone call, text, e-mail or social media.

In keeping with the school's Code of Behaviour, this policy will apply to incidents of bullying outside school, when a child is not under the care and supervision of the school, only when there is a **clear connection** with the school and a demonstrable impact on its work e.g. intimidation/bullying by means of the internet/mobile phones.

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows:
  - Class Teacher
  - Supervising Teacher (if relevant)
  - Principal
5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyberbullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:
  - Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.
  - Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
  - Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.
  - Catch them being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
  - Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN.
  - Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
  - Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.
  - Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media
  - Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use. Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules
  - Actively involve parents and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media.
  - Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.
  - Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.
  - All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.

- Ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.

#### SPECIFIC MEASURES

- Prior to accepting their place in the school each parent is required to become familiar with the Schools Code of Behaviour which is available for inspection in the school or on the website [www.moynens.com](http://www.moynens.com)
  - At the start of each School Year the parents of all new entrants will be informed of the school's Anti- Bullying Policy, copies of which are available through the office/school website.
  - Each class teacher will highlight the children's awareness of bullying as unacceptable behaviour, in an age-appropriate way. This will be explored through Religion Class, Circle Time and S.P.H.E. Lessons (Stay Safe, Fun Friends, Friends for Life)
  - While the Social, Personal and Health Education Programme [S.P.H.E.] provides the main focus for dealing with issues around bullying, all teachers can influence attitudes to bullying behaviour in a positive manner through a range of curricular initiatives.
  - Staff members will use specific questions [Appendix 1] together with School Rules and Code of Behaviour to help our pupils analyse any misbehaviour that may occur. These questions need to be modelled / practised to ensure their effectiveness.
  - We request and actively encourage parents to make their children aware of the unacceptability of bullying behaviour and encourage them to report such behaviour to the teachers whenever they witness it.
  - We acknowledge the vital role that all ancillary staff members play in helping to counter potential bullying behaviour in our school.
  - The **last week in September or First week in October annually** will be designated as **Friendship/Anti-bullying Week**. This week will be planned by whole staff and will involve both pupils and parents.
  - There will be termly surveys done by staff to ensure the voice of the pupils is heard in all matters related to bullying/friendship.
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:
1. The primary aim for the relevant teacher 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);
  2. In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
  3. All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly;

4. Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers, cleaners etc. must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;
5. Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible;
6. It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset;
7. Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents;
8. Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
9. All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way as bystanders.
10. When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should seek answers to questions of **what, where, when, who and why**. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner;
11. 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;
12. Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher;
13. It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s);
14. The relevant teacher will record their investigation of the incident(s)/behaviour(s) by completing Appendix 2A;
15. In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher 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 school policy). The school should give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils;
16. Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;

17. It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school.
18. 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 pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable. This can have a therapeutic effect;
19. 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, it must be recorded by the relevant teacher in the recording template at Appendix 2
20. In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgement, 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 Principal
21. 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, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures;
22. 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 for Children.

#### Procedure for recording Bullying Behaviour

1. While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher 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;
2. If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher will complete Appendix 2 as a record of the investigation.
3. 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 occurred, a copy of the completed Appendix 2 Form will be provided to the Principal/Deputy Principal. It should also be noted that the timeline for recording bullying behaviour in the recording template at Appendix 2

does not in any way preclude the relevant teacher from consulting the Principal or Deputy Principal at an earlier stage in relation to a case.

4. If the relevant teacher determines that the bullying behaviour has been adequately and appropriately addressed, the completed Appendix 2 Form may be submitted to the Principal/Deputy Principal at the end of the school year.

#### Periodic summary reports to the Board of Management

- At the bi-monthly BoM meetings, the Principal will provide a report to the Board of Management setting out: (i) the overall number of bullying cases reported (by means of the bullying recording template at Appendix 2) since the previous report to the Board and (ii) confirmation that all cases referred to at (i) above have been or are being dealt with in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy and the AntiBullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools.
  - The minutes of the Board of Management meeting will record the above but will not include any identifying details of the pupils involved.
7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:
    - Implementation of Friends for Life to rebuild self esteem or another appropriate programme as selected by class teacher.

#### 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 was adopted by the Board of Management on 29/02/2024**

11. 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.
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 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.

Signed



Alison Courtney

Chairperson

BoM



Mary Farrell

Principal

Date: 29.02.2024



Appendix 1:

Questions for the child alleged to be involved in the bullying behaviour

- What happened?
- What were you thinking of then/since?
- Who could have been affected by what you did and how?
- What could you have done differently?
- What needs to happen now to make things right

Questions for the child alleged to be the victim of the bullying behaviour

- What did you think when you realised what was happening?
- How did this make you feel?
- How did this impact on others?
- What was the hardest thing?
- What needs to happen to make things right