St. Joseph's Primary School

Anti-Bullying Policy

Introduction

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* published in September 2013.

Rationale

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 that
    - Is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity
    - Encourage pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment
    - Promote 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
    - Explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including homophobic and transphobic bullying
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils
- Supports for staff
- Consistent recording, investigation, and follow-up of bullying behaviour (including the use of established intervention strategies)
- Ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy

Definition

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

- 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, these isolated incidents will be recorded for monitoring purposes.

Also, 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. Evidence to support this allegation will need to be provided. This evidence will be handled and filed with the upmost discretion.

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

Types of bullying

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

- **Physical aggression**: This behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While pupils often engage in 'mess fights', they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain and will face the same sanctions.
- **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 pupil in public places, by passing around notes about or drawings of the pupil 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 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.

- o **Damage to property**: Personal property can be the focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, school books and other learning material or interference with a pupil's belongings or bicycle. 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.
- o **Extortion**: Demands for money may be made, often accompanied by threats (sometimes carried out in the event of the targeted pupil not delivering on the demand). A pupil may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to another who is engaged in bullying behaviour**.**

All accusations are investigated, recorded, monitored and reviewed when necessary.

Roles & Responsibilities

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

- All teachers, Deputy Principal and Principal.

Initiatives

Education will focus on awareness and prevention of bullying. Pupils will engage with specific SPHE programmes that promote respect, resilience and self-esteem while also building empathy towards one another (refer to SPHE policy). The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying, including homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows (Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

- Implementing a school ethos that encourages pupils to discuss and disclose incidents of bullying behaviour with their parents, members of staff and the Principal. Pupils are given opportunities to disclose incidents of bullying formally once per term and informally on a regular basis by their class teacher throughout the year.
- Compliance with the *Code of Behaviour* and *Discipline Policy* to prevent individual incidents of negative behaviour from escalating to bullying
- Compliance with the *Supervision Policy* to ensure that pupils are supervised at all times during school hours
- Delivery of the *Stay Safe* programme, which is designed to equip each student with a set of personal safety skills including the ability to recognise and cope with bullying, to all classes every year
- Elements of the SPHE curriculum covering belonging, communication, friendship, self-esteem and relationships are taught annually
- Delivery of the RSE programme annually as per SPHE policy
- Assemblies are used to encourage, reinforce and promote positive behaviours. Messages against negative behaviour and bullying are reinforced at school assemblies.
- Anti-bullying posters are displayed around the school
- For the prevention of incidents and increased safety of pupils the playground is divided into sections for class groupings and supervised accordingly
- The school website has links for parents on safe use of the Internet
- All Internet access by pupils is supervised

- All teachers use a positive reward scheme to praise and affirm positive behaviour. We also run a school wide behaviour initiative called 'St. Joseph's House Points' which reinforces positive behaviour throughout the school.
- All members of the school community are asked to be conscious of and to look out for signs that suggest a pupil is being bullied
- The HSCL Coordinator will run Internet safety courses for parents when funding permits

Procedures

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. 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 (Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

- In investigating and dealing with alleged bullying, teachers will exercise professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.

- Unless an incident is of a very serious nature, it will be dealt with by the classroom teacher, who will talk to the children involved and resolve the issue. Sanctions will be imposed when deemed necessary.

- If the bullying behaviour is serious or a child is regularly involved, the matter will be brought to the attention of the Principal, who will interview the pupils involved with class teacher to establish the facts. Sanctions will be imposed when deemed necessary.

- If it is deemed necessary the Principal will make arrangements to meet with the parents of the child who is seen to be bullying and separately with the parents of the victim of bullying. The class teacher may be involved. The pupils themselves may be required to attend part or all of these meetings. Sanctions will be taken against the pupil guilty of the bullying behaviour.

- All sanctions taken to deal with bullying behaviour will be a proportionate response to the seriousness and persistence of the bullying behaviour. Sanctions are described in the *Code of Behaviour* and *Discipline Policy*.

- A record will be kept of all incidents of bullying behaviour by pupils and of any meetings with the pupil and his parents.

- Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures a complaint can be lodged to the Board of Management as per the schools complaints procedure. In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, parents have the right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

- For out-of-school instances of serious bullying behaviour, parents will be encouraged to avail of the services of the Garda Juvenile Liaison Officer.

- The school will seek the advice of Tusla when deemed necessary

- In cases in which 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, he/she will record the matter on the Recording Form and submit it to the Principal or Deputy Principal for further consideration.

- Issues in relation to bullying within our school are investigated thoroughly, in a timely manner and with respect for all parties involved. However, it is beyond our remit as a school to govern the actions of pupils outside of our contact hours. During our supervision hours, each pupils safety and welfare is of paramount priority to us in St. Joseph's.

- St. Joseph's Primary school strongly discourage the use of social media such as social network sites, instant messaging, gaming sites, chatrooms and other such online technologies until they meet the legally required age. Matters arising in relation to cyber bullying will only be dealt with on a case by case basis. Investigation by the school is only warranted if these matters arising through cyber bullying greatly impact upon a pupils willingness to attend school and/or his ability to learn.

Supports Provided

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

- Efforts will be made to address the emotional needs and devise strategies for the victim to deal with the bullying. This may involve reinforcing the programme being covered in class, e.g. 'Stay Safe', 'Walk Tall', 'RSE' , or other strategies, e.g. Art Therapy or involving the school psychologist with parents/pupils.
- Efforts will be made to address the emotional needs of the bully by reinforcing the programme being covered in class, e.g. 'Stay Safe', 'Walk Tall', 'RSE', or attending the Art Therapy, or involving the school psychologist and drawing up a Behavioural Plan for the pupil.
- Parents of the victim of the bullying behaviour will be asked to frequently report to the Principal / Class Teacher to ensure that the bullying behaviour has ceased.
- Staff members will be asked to discreetly monitor the victim and the bully to ensure that the bullying behaviour has ceased.
- The HSCL Co-ordinator will support parents in dealing with bullying behaviour.
- Staff will be made aware of all serious cases of bullying in order to ensure the safety of the pupil/pupils involved and maximize supports available to all
- SET teachers and/or SCP workers will provide supplementary support work to pupils when required

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.

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 the harassment of pupils on any of the nine grounds specified: gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, and membership of the Traveller community.

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management on the date below.

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

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to school personnel, to the Parents Council, to the Patron and the Department.
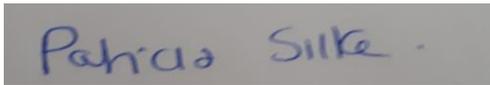
Signed:

(Chairperson of Board of Management)   (Principal)

(Chairperson Parents Council)

St. Joseph's Primary School

Recording of 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

_____
_____
_____

3. Source of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es))*		**4. Location** of incidents (tick relevant box(es))*	
Pupil concerned		Playground	
Other pupil		Classroom	
Parent		Corridor	
Teacher		Toilets	
Other		Other	

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

6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) *

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

9. Details of actions taken

Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher)   Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

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

The Board of Management 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 *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*?	
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 _____   Date _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _____   Date _____
Principal

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

To: _____

The Board of Management of St. Joseph's Primary School wishes to inform you that:

o   The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting on _____ .

o   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