Anti-Bullying Policy

The role of the school is to provide an appropriate education for all its pupils. A stable, secure learning environment is an essential requirement to achieve this goal. Bullying behaviour by its very nature undermines and dilutes the quality of education. It can have short and long term effects on the physical and mental well-being of pupils, on engagement with school, on self-confidence and on the ability to pursue ambitions and interests.

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. Francis of Assisi 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) 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;

*See Appendix A

(b) Effective leadership which

- Supports a school culture and climate that celebrates difference

- Engenders an ethos under which bullying is unacceptable

- Involves staff, pupils and parents in developing and implementing a vision of the school where diversity is accepted and celebrated

- "All adults in the school (teachers and parents) have a responsibility to model the school's standards of behaviour, in their dealings with both pupils and with each other, since their example is a powerful source of learning for children." (NEWB)

(c) A school-wide approach which

- Involves the whole school community (school management, staff, parents and pupils)

- Openly discusses bullying.

Operates a high degree of school vigilance Promotes

relevant home/school/community links

- Provides a consistent response to bullying

(d) A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact

(e) 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;

(f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils

(g) Supports for staff which

- Ensures the staff has sufficient familiarity with the school's policy

- Enables them to apply the policy effectively and appropriately

(h) Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies)

(i) 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

- 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 (including group text messages) 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.*

*See Appendix B for additional information on different types of bullying

4. The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:
   - The class teacher

   - The teachers on yard/supervision duty

   - The Principal and Deputy Principal (all allegations of bullying are reported to the Principal/Deputy Principal)

   - Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying) 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*):

School-wide approach

- A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.

- The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.

- The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Pupils will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.

- Whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develop an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it – prevention and intervention.

- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extracurricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.

- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parents/guardians are given a copy of the policy along with the Code of Behaviour on enrolment.

- The implementation of awareness measures including but not limited to:
  1. Good Behaviour Week
  2. Friendship Week and the promotion of friendship
  3. Friends for Life Programme
  4. Speakers on Internet Safety and Cyber Bullying Workshops for children and parents
  5. Raising awareness at assemblies
  6. Garda Programme on internet safety and cyber bullying

- Encourage a culture of telling with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way pupils will gain confidence in telling. 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. Pupils might tell a trusted adult such as a parent/guardian/teacher/Principal.

- Adherence to the school's Acceptable Use Policy and the strict monitoring of pupil's access to technology and the use of mobile phones during school time. In preventing and deterring cyber-

bullying, mobile phones are not allowed in school. If a parent has written to the school requesting an exemption from this rule, the phone must be powered off at all times during the school day. Internet usage by the pupils is supervised and the School's IT network blocks access to popular social network sites. In light of these provisions, pupils' ability to engage in any form of cyber-bullying on school

premises and within school hours is extremely limited at all times. It needs to be recognised that pupils' online activities occur mainly outside of school but that these activities can impact on school. In order to promote the positive and appropriate use of the internet and in particular of social media sites and services, parents are strongly encouraged to monitor their children's use of technology.

Implementation of curricula
- The implementation of the SPHE, RSE, Stay Safe, Walk Tall Programmes.
- The use of Circle Time activities.
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programme, by the Community Garda, covering issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying to 5th and 6th class pupils.

- Class awareness lessons, appropriate to the age of the child, are given on the topic of bullying, where the subject is openly discussed and pupils are engaged in learning about their rights as well as their obligations in the matter.

Links to other policies
Code of Behaviour
Acceptable Use Policy
Child Protection Policy

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:

<u>Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying</u>

The primary aim 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;

Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parents/guardians) understand this approach from the outset.

<u>*Reporting bullying behaviour*</u>

- Any pupil or parent/guardian may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.

- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.

- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;

<u>*Investigating and dealing with incidents: Style of approach*</u>

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the relevant teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.

- Parents/guardians 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.

- Where possible incidents should be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.

- If a group is involved, each member may be interviewed individually at first.

- It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s). • The Principal will be notified of all suspected bullying and updated on the progress of the investigation.

- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents/guardians of the parties involved will 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 will give parents/guardians an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the pupils.

- Where the relevant teacher has determined 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 school's anti-bullying policy and efforts will be made to try to get him / her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil/pupils being bullied.

- It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents/guardians) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his / her parents/guardians and the school.

- Where a bullying incident is serious and where the behaviour involved is regarded as potentially abusive, the Principal may contact outside agencies (e.g. NEPS, HSE Children and Family Services, Gardaí) where deemed appropriate and parents/guardians will be informed when this is being done.

Follow up on bullying behaviour

- 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;
  - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents/guardians or the school Principal or Deputy Principal

- A follow-up with the relevant parties involved should be arranged.

- Where a parent/guardian is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent/guardian will be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.

- In the event that a parent/guardian has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school will advise the parent/guardian of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Recording of bullying behaviour

The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

- If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- For this purpose the relevant teacher will fill in Appendix 3 to record the bullying behaviour.
- The relevant teacher will give a copy of their written records and Appendix 3 to the Principal who will store them in a secure location. The teacher will keep their own records for a period of one

academic year.

- At least once in every school term, the Principal will report the overall number of bullying cases reported by means of the Appendix 3 template to the Board of Management and will confirm that all of these cases have been or are being dealt with in accordance with the school's anti-bullying

policy and the Department of Education's Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools.

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

- All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience e.g.
    - O Group work such as circle time
    - O SPHE
    - O Extracurricular activities
    - O Providing pupils with strategies to assist them in addressing problems as they arise

If pupils require counselling or further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.

Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a 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 .

11.   This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request and provided to the PTA. 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, will be readily accessible to parents and pupils on request and provided to the PTA. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: Micheál Ó Braonáin   Signed: Johanne Dunne
    (Chairperson of Board of Management)   (Principal)

Date: 25/04/23   Date: 25/04/23

Date of next review: <u>As required</u>

Appendix A

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 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 vital role of parents in equipping the pupil with a range of life-skills.

❖ 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, equity including gender equity, tolerance and understanding among all its members both in school 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.

❖ Central to a positive school culture is respectful relationships across the entire school community. This encompasses relationships amongst peers (e.g. pupil to pupil, teacher to teacher) and relationships between groups (e.g. teachers and pupils, parents and teachers etc.)

Appendix B

Examples of Bullying Behaviours

General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying	- Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc. - Physical aggression - Damage to property - Persistent name calling/Jeering - The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person - Offensive graffiti - Extortion - Intimidation - Insulting or offensive gestures - Invasion of personal space - A combination of any of the types listed.
Cyber	**Denigration**: Spreading rumors, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation **Harassment**: Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual **Impersonation**: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name **Flaming**: Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight **Trickery**: Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online **Outing**: Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images **Exclusion**: Purposefully excluding someone from an online - group **Cyber stalking**: Ongoing harassment and denigration that - causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety - Silent telephone/mobile phone calls - Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls - Abusive text messages - Abusive email - Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/ Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles - Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures - Abusive posts on any form of communication technology

Identity Based Behaviours

Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).

	•
Homophobic and Transgender	• Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation • Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation • Name calling used in a derogatory manner • Physical intimidation or attacks • Threats
Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community	• Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background Exclusion on the basis of any of the above
Relational	This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include: • Malicious gossip • Isolation & exclusion Name calling •
Sexual	• Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching Harassment •
Special Educational Needs, Disability	• Name calling Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying • Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues. • Mimicking a person's disability Setting others up for ridicule

Appendix 3 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

_____

_____

_____

3. Source of bullying concern/report   4. Location of incidents

(tick relevant box(es))   (tick relevant box(es))

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

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 *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 to 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

                                                                      Date: _____

Signed:

_____
Principal

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

To: _____

The Board of Management of St. Francis of Assisi 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 of_____[date].

- 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