



## St John's (Church of Ireland) National School

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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. John's N.S 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 practise in 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
  - 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:**

- 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 schools' 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*.

The relevant teacher for investigating and dealing with bullying is the class teacher.

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

Individual teachers must take appropriate measures regarding reports of bullying behaviour in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy.

In these procedures, the member of teaching staff who has responsibility for investigating and dealing with bullying is referred to as the "relevant teacher".

**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**

Effective practice includes prevention and awareness raising measures across all aspects of bullying and involves strategies to engage pupils in addressing problems when they arise. In particular, such strategies need to build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils.

As self-esteem is a major factor in determining behaviour, schools should, through both their curricular and extra-curricular programmes, provide pupils with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth.

Initiatives and programmes focused on developing pupils' awareness and understanding of bullying and in particular homophobic and transphobic bullying. For example, the inclusion of LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans-gender) posters on notice boards, discussions with parents about specific statements of welcome and respect for LGBT members of the school community, teaching the Social, Personal, Health Education (SPHE) resource, *Growing Up LGBT* and participating in LGBT awareness events are just some of the ways in which a school can address homophobic and transphobic bullying.

Prevention and awareness raising measures must also deal with cyber-bullying. The best way to address cyber-bullying is to prevent it happening in the first place. Prevention and any awareness raising measures should 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. The school-wide approach and the role of parents as outlined in Section 6.3 is of importance in this regard. The prevention and awareness raising measures also takes into account the scope for cyber-bullying to occur as a result of access to technology from within the school

Our school's approach to tackling and preventing bullying takes particular account of the needs of pupils with disabilities or with SEN , and joins up with other relevant school policies and supports and should ensure that all the services that provide for such pupils work together. Approaches to decreasing the likelihood of bullying for pupils with SEN include improving 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 is appropriate to the type of bullying and 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.

Our teachers can influence attitudes to bullying behaviour in a positive manner through a range of curricular initiatives. There are a number of curriculum components and programmes which are particularly relevant to the prevention of bullying and the promotion of respect for diversity and inclusiveness. The SPHE curriculum makes specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the inter-related areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships. The Stay Safe programme at primary level, is a personal safety skills programme which seeks to enhance children's self-

protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying. The Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) programme at post-primary provides opportunities to explore and discuss areas such as human sexuality and relationships, which has particular relevance to identity-based bullying. Various other social, health and media education programmes can further help to address the problem of bullying behaviour. For example, the *Schools for Health in Ireland* framework provides guidance of developing a health promoting school.

There is space within the teaching of all subjects to foster an attitude of respect for all: to promote the value of diversity; to address prejudice and stereotyping and to highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour. In English, there is a wide range of literature available which could be used to stimulate discussion. In Geography and History references to colonisation, exploitation and dictatorships could be used to illustrate the negative aspect of power. The work could be extended into many other areas such as Art, Drama, Religious Education, and Physical Education. Co-operation and group enterprise can be promoted through team sports, school clubs and societies as well as through practical subjects. Sporting activities in particular can provide excellent opportunities for channelling and learning how to control aggression.

**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:**

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.

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.

The relevant teacher must use the recording template to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

- a) In cases where he/she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that the bullying behaviour occurred; and
- b) Where the school has decided as part of its anti-bullying policy that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

In each of the circumstances at (a) and (b) above, the recording template must be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable. It should also be noted that the timeline for recording bullying behaviour in the recording template 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.

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

A programme of support for pupils who have been bullied will be put in place.

Such pupils may need counselling and /or opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed.

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A programme of support for those pupils involved in bullying behaviour is also part of the schools intervention process. Pupils involved in bullying behaviour may need assistance on an ongoing basis. For those with low self-esteem, opportunities are developed to increase feelings of self-worth. It is, therefore, important that the learning strategies applied within the school allow for the enhancement of the pupil's self-worth. Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.

Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour should be encouraged to discuss them with teachers.

**4. Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils**

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

**5. 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.

6. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 11/10/23. (date)
7. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website, (or where none exists, is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the parents association (where one exists) A copy of this policy will be made available to the DES (Department of Education and Skills) and the Patron if requested.
8. 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, (or where none exists, be otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists) A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the Patron and DES (Department of Education and Skills)

Signed: Eileen L. O.  
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: 11/10/23

Signed: Michelle Shoukey  
(Principal)

Date: 11/10/23

Date of next review: 11/10/23.