



# ST JOSEPH'S NATIONAL SCHOOL

Mulhussey, Kilcock, Co. Meath, W23 T8YC

maolhosae@gmail.com www.mulhusseyns.ie

Tel: 01 6285513 Acting Principal: Karen Murray Roll No. 18887A



## Anti-Bullying Policy

### 1. 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 (BOM) of St Joseph's National School has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour. The policy fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* which were published in September 2013.

### 2. Key principles

The BOM recognises the very serious nature of the bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles 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 whole 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 identity based bullying
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils
- Supports for staff
- Consistent recording, investigating and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies).
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy

### 3. 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.*



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The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying which applies to both children and staff

- 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 travelling community and bullying of those with disabilities or SEN.

Isolated or one-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 will be dealt with as 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.

Parents bullying members of staff will be dealt with in accordance with the school's code of behaviour under the section Parental Code of Behaviour.

Staff bullying staff will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Grievance Procedures for staff. All school personnel are expected to behave in a professional way in their dealings with parents, staff and children. We promote respectful relationships across the school community.

#### 4. The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with the bullying are



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All class teachers, the Deputy Principal and Principal. The SET will be involved if necessary with pupils with special educational needs.

### 5. Education and prevention strategies

The education and prevention strategies promote both a culture of telling and raising awareness of bullying:

#### Create a culture of telling:

- Victims should be reassured that if they tell, something will be done about the bullying in a safe manner and all reported incidents will be dealt with.
- Class lessons to be provided to enable pupils 'how to tell' (telling protocol)
- Bystanders can be the key to resolving bullying and if anyone witnesses bullying behaviour, they should always tell a teacher. This not telling tales but a means of protecting victim.
- Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders.
- Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
- Hand note up with homework.
- Make a phone call to the school or a trusted teacher in the school.
- Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
- Worry box in class.
- Teachers should repeatedly reinforce the message that if anyone is the victim of bullying behaviour, they should not retaliate in any way, but they should tell.

#### Raising the awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour by

- Engaging in formal teaching within the class setting through SPHE programmes.
- Awareness of bullying is addressed in the classroom as part of the Stay Safe Programme, at school assemblies, through the school policy on pastoral care and on other informal occasions when the opportunity arises.
- Encouraging pupils to report any incident of bullying.
- Complaints of bullying to be reported quickly, firmly and fairly and are recorded.
- The Principal is informed of any instance of bullying.
- Anti-Bullying is an item of every staff meeting agenda.





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- Positive reinforcement by teachers in classroom setting (Class reward system, students of the week, gaelgeoir na seachtaine, golden time, spot prizes, stars, stickers etc.)
- Modelling of respectful behaviour and language by teachers and staff.
- Promotion of extra-curricular activities which encourage co-operation among pupils (to extend this beyond sport).
- Rewarding incidents of good and improved behaviour and showing acts of kindness at class level and whole-school e.g. Student of the Week/Wellness week.
- Encouraging students to look out for each other and to be responsible for their own behaviour.
- All teachers are required to be vigilant on yard duty – record all incidences – monitor repeat offenders.
- Immediate affirmation of children who report incidents of bullying which they have witnessed.
- Each class to have a set of class rules which complement the school's Code of Behaviour.
- Renew the signs around the school.
- Ensure supervision at all times when pupils can access the internet.
- All teachers to do a less on internet safety – coincide with Internet Safety Day.

### 6. Procedure for investigation, follow up and recording

Incidents of Bully are generally dealt with on a staged basis. All reports of bullying must be dealt with initially by a class teacher. At the Principal's/teacher's discretion other interventions may be used in relation to a serious offence e.g. it is necessary to bring serious incidents to the attention of parents.

The aim for the class 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 procedure for investigation, follow up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying are as follows:

#### Stage 1 of the investigation process



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An important part of our school approach to behaviour is the concept of 'Restorative Practices' and this approach is intertwined with our 'anti-bullying policy'.

An important element in Restorative Practice is 'Fair Process'.

**Expectations:** everyone knows what is expected of them.

**Engagement:** involves individuals in decisions/listening to views.

**Explanation:** clarify how decisions are reached.

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

- When a bullying incident comes to the notice of a teacher, it is important to gather all of the facts from both sides (What, where, when, who why?). This will involve an interview with the alleged bully, victim, and/or witnesses.
- In line with 'Restorative Practices', once off offenders are asked the following questions
  - What happened?
  - What were you thinking at the time?
  - What have you thought about since?
  - Who has been affected by what you have done? In what way?
  - What do you need to do to make things right?
- Non-teaching staff will be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them to the relevant teacher.
- The teacher should take a calm, unemotional, problem-solving approach.
- All sides are listened to separately and notes are taken and later recorded in the pupil profiles.
- The notes are brief, factual and should be void of emotional or judgemental language.

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. Where possible, a witness is present. It is explained to the alleged bully how hurtful their behaviour is and attempts are made to encourage them to empathise with the alleged victim.

### Stage 2 of the investigation process



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If this child breaks the promise and re-offends then the class teacher will interview the child/children again. It is explained to them that this is their second time offending and that they have not committed to their promise. Again, attempts will be made to resolve the situation. This time parents will be notified by phone and the child will fill in a class contract. A 20 day monitoring period will begin.

They are now advised that if they break this promise again, they will have a meeting with the principal and their parents in the office and will face relevant sanctions.

Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigations and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible.

### Stage 3 of the investigation process

If a child breaks their promise twice then the matter is referred to the Principal. The Principal meets with the child and the parent. The child will receive relevant sanction.

A bullying file is open.

### Recording of bullying behaviour

It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner.

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

- All staff must keep a written record of any incidents on the pupil profiles witnessed by them or notified to them. All incidents must be retained and reported to the relevant teacher each year.
- The relevant teacher must inform the Principal and Deputy Principal of all incidents being investigated.

### Formal Stage 1 – determination that bullying has occurred

- 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.
- All incidents will be logged by class teacher and incidents which have not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days will be recorded by the class teacher on the recording template Appendix 2 (Anti-bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools). This template will be completed in full and a copy given to the Deputy Principal and Principal.





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At least once every school term the Principal will prove a report to the BOM setting out the overall number of bullying cases reported by means of this template and confirmation that all cases are being dealt with in accordance with procedure.

### **7. Programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:**

#### **Victims**

- Victims are reassured from the outset that they are not to blame.
- Strategies for restoring self-esteem are explored between teacher and parents/guardians.
- Where deemed necessary, the child in consultation with parents may be referred for counselling.
- Staged approach-class support, school support (as per Continuum – Behavioural, Emotional and Social difficulties – NEPS).
- The parents of the pupils concerned will be advised to contact the local Gardaí if appropriate.

#### **Bullies**

- If pupils require counselling of 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.
- Staged approach – class support, school support (as per Continuum – Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties – NEPS)
- The school will constantly remind parents of the dangers of 'cyber-bullying' as can happen with the use of social networking sites and mobile phones.
- The school cannot be responsible for disagreements between pupils that happen outside the school grounds but will make reasonable efforts to cooperate with parents in assisting them to resolve the issues.

### **8. Supervision and Monitoring of pupils**

The BOM 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**



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The BOM confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practical 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 Travelling community.

10. The policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management on the 4<sup>th</sup> of October 2022 and on the 27<sup>th</sup> of September 2023.
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 the 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.

### Success Criteria

The success of this policy will be assessed at the end of each school year by the teaching staff.

**Review Date:** September 2025

Ratified by the Board of Management

Signed: John J. Keane Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: 25/09/2024

Signed: Karen Murray Principal

Date: 25/9/24





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### Appendix 1 Class Contract

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

I will do my best to:

1.

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2.

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3.

Signed by:

\_\_\_\_\_ Pupil

Print name below

\_\_\_\_\_ Parent

Print name below

\_\_\_\_\_ Teacher

Print name below

\_\_\_\_\_ Principal

Print name below

### Appendix 2 Template for recording bullying behaviour

Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour


Source of bullying concern/report	Location of bullying concern/report
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### Dismissal at End of School Day

All classes line up at their designated place on the yard.

When each child sees the authorised person who is collecting then they inform their class teacher and then proceed to meet parent/guardian on the footpath.

Students are not permitted to cross the car park without the adult who is collecting them.

Students who are walking or cycling home unaccompanied must submit signed consent by parent/guardian.

All parents are asked to complete an authorised pick up list and submit it to their child's class teacher. Parents are responsible to amend this list as required.

Parents are asked to contact their child's class teacher via Aladdin or by phoning the school phone if collection arrangements change.

In undertaking this risk assessment the Board of Management has endeavoured to identify

**Important note:** It should be noted that risk in the context of this risk assessment is in the risk of 'harm' as defined in the Children First Act 2015 and not general health and safety risk.

The definition of harm is set out in Chapter 4 of the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2023*;

as far as possible the risks of harm that are relevant to this school and to ensure that adequate procedures are in place to manage all risks identified. While it is not possible to foresee and remove all risk of harm, the school has in place the procedures listed in this risk assessment to manage and reduce risk to the greatest possible extent.

This risk assessment has been completed by the Board of Management on the 25<sup>th</sup> of September 2024.

It shall be reviewed as part of the school's annual review of its Child Safeguarding Statement.

Ratified by the Board of Management

Signed: John J. Keane Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: 25/09/2024

Signed: Karen Murray Principal

Date: 25/9/24



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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Relevant Teacher

Print name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 3 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.

	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?	Yes
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	Yes
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	Yes
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?	Yes
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	Yes
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	Yes
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	Yes



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Have the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	Yes
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	Yes
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	Yes
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?	Yes
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	Yes
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	No
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	No
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?	N/A
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	No
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	Yes

Signed: John J. Keane Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: 25/09/2024

Signed: Karen Murray Principal

Date: 25/9/24





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### Appendix 4 Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the anti-bullying policy

To: Parents' Association

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

The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of 25/09/2024 (date).

The 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.

Ratified by the Board of Management

Signed: John J. Keane Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: 25/09/2024

Signed: Karen Murray Principal



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Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Appendix 5 Summary of Investigation and Recording

#### Stage 1 of the investigation process

- Use a Restorative Practice Approach
- Interview the alleged bully, victim and/or witnesses.
- All sides are listened to separately and notes are taken and later recorded in the pupil profiles.
- It is explained to the alleged bully how hurtful their behaviour is and attempts are made to encourage them to empathise with the alleged victim.
- Parents are contacted.
- Teacher checks in regularly with children involved.

#### Stage 2 of the investigation process

- If this child breaks the promise and re-offends then the class teacher will interview the child/children again.
- The child will fill in a class contract.
- A 20 day monitoring period will begin.
- Parents are contacted again.
- The Principal is informed.

#### Stage 3 of the investigation process

- If a child breaks their promise again then the matter is referred the Principal. The Principal meets with the child and the parent.
- The child will face relevant sanction.



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- A bullying file is open.

### Recording of bullying behaviour

- Incidents which have been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days will be recorded by the class teacher on the recording template Appendix 2.
- A copy will be given to the Deputy Principal and Principal.