



St. Louis National School - Rathkenny

School Road, Rathkenny, Navan, Co Meath. C15 PH60

E-mail: rathkennyschool@gmail.com

Phone: 085 164 9836 / 046 90 54417

Registered Charity No.: 20131036

School Roll No. 15483H

School Website: www.rathkennyschool.ie

Principal Laura Conaty

Deputy Principal Julie McMahon

Revision September 2024

ANTI BULLYING POLICY

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1. INTRODUCTION

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB), the Board of Management of St. Louis NS 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. KEY PRINCIPLES OF BEST PRACTICE IN PREVENTING AND TACKLING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

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 nonthreatening environment; and

- 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;**





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- 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. BULLYING DEFINITION AND TYPES

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 e.g., 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.





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4. RELEVANT TEACHER

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

Class Teacher of pupil accused of/being bullied

Laura Conaty School Principal

Julie McMahon Deputy Principal

5. EXAMPLES OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

<p>General Behaviours which apply to all types of bullying</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Harassment - Physical Aggression - Damage to Property - Name Calling - The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures and or other materials aimed at intimidating another person - Offensive graffiti - Extortion - Intimidation - Insulting looks and gestures - Invasion of Personal Space - A Combination of Above
<p>Cyber</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Denigration - Harassment - Impersonation - Flaming - Trickery - Outing - Exclusion - Cyber Stalking - Outing - Silent telephone calls





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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Abusive telephone calls - Abusive emails, text message, communication on social media, social media comments, abusive posts, abusive pictures
Identity based Behaviours	Including any of the 9 discriminatory grounds mentioned in equality legislation (gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, membership of travelling community)
Homophobic and Transgender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spreading rumours about someone's sexual orientation - Name calling - Physical intimidation - Attacks - Threats
Race, Nationality and membership of Travelling Community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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	<p>This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Malicious gossip - Isolation and exclusion from a group or class group - Ignoring - Taking someone's friends away so as to isolate and hurt them - Talking badly behind their backs - Spreading rumours - Breaking confidence excluding times for child protection reasons - Use of terminology such as nerd or stupid to describe someone in a derogatory way - The "Look"





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Sexual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments - Unwelcome or inappropriate touching - Harassment
Special needs and disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Name Calling - Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs - Taking advantage of some pupil's vulnerabilities or limited capacity to defend themselves or understand social cues or situations - Mimicking their disability - Setting other up for ridicule

6. EDUCATION AND PREVENTION STRATEGIES

This list is non exhaustive

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 (see Section 6.5 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):

1. Each year at assemblies and in classes, pupils are reminded of the school messages in relation to dealing with issues where they feel uncomfortable
2. Children are encouraged to problem solve for themselves, solving minor issues for themselves with prompt questions such as "How could you solve that problem?" Parents also have a key role in encouraging children to do this
3. We place an emphasis on student praise in order to build self-worth and confidence in all pupils e.g. assembly each week, student of the week, sharing achievements with the class
4. Say no and try to sort the problem yourself by saying things such as "that was not very nice." "That hurt me. I think you should say sorry. If you don't say sorry I will have to tell the teacher".
5. Walk away and tell.
6. During the year each class undertakes Social Personal Health Education lessons on the themes of personal safety, anti-bullying and friendship using the Stay Safe, Walk Tall and Relationships and Sexuality Education programmes.





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7. The community Garda comes to the school every two years for pupils from 3rd to 6th class to educate pupils on internet safety.
8. Prevention and awareness raising measures focusing on cyber bullying by educating pupils on online safety and appropriate online behaviour
9. A school wide approach to respect for everyone – parents to staff, staff to parents, staff to staff, staff to pupils, pupils to staff etc.
10. Promoting diversity and inclusion through various activities throughout the year and informally on a daily basis, addressing issues of prejudice and stereotyping and highlighting the unacceptability of bullying behaviour
11. Whole staff CPD on preventing bullying
12. An annual audit of the anti-bullying policy and implementing a key action plan for targets for that school year to enhance our policy and practices
13. School wide awareness of bullying, especially when we are teaching the Stay Safe programme, utilising the National Parents' Council talks to help when appropriate for parents to be included as much as possible
14. Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds and on school tours
Implementing a robust school supervision policy, including encouraging non-teaching staff to report any incidents to the relevant class teacher
15. School's anti bullying policy discussed with pupils (at an age appropriate level) and all parents given a copy of the anti-bullying policy and making it available on our school website www.rathkennyschool.ie
16. Encourage a culture of telling, with emphasis on the importance of bystanders
17. Ensuring pupils know how to tell the teacher, discreetly if needs be
18. The development of a robust Acceptable Use Policy and Mobile Phone policy in the school
19. CPD for all staff in delivering these programmes
20. Extending the theme of bullying to different curriculum areas such as visual arts, drama, RE and PE.
21. Encouraging project work and group work with pupils to foster group skills and social skills
22. Linking bullying awareness into other policies across the school such as Child Safeguarding Statement, Supervision, AUP, Attendance, Code of Behaviour
23. Anti-Bullying website <http://www.tacklebullying.ie/> set up by the Department of Education
24. Posters and books addressing cyber-bullying in classrooms
25. Cineáltas Action Plan on Bullying
26. Restorative Practice
27. The school will also work with the alleged bullies and their victims in revising the programmes above, and support in resolving the issues raised.





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7. PROCEDURES FOR INVESTIGATING AND DEALING WITH BULLYING

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

Step 1

1. Any pupil, parent may bring a suspected bullying incident to the attention of the class teacher
2. All reports of bullying, no matter how minor, are noted, investigated and dealt with by teachers. In that way pupils will gain confidence in "telling". We in St. Louis N.S., Rathkenny consider this confidence factor is of vital importance. Serious cases of bullying behaviour by pupils are referred immediately to the principal or deputy principal.
3. The non-teaching staff, such as secretary and SNA are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the appropriate teaching member of staff.
4. In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred
5. Teachers should take a calm unemotional approach
6. Initial investigations will be done in class but in some instances, incidents may be best discussed outside the classroom to ensure the privacy of all involved
7. All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity to all involved with the regard to the rights of all pupils involved
8. Pupils not directly involved can have significant input and provide useful information
9. Groups may need to be interviewed separately at first
10. It may also be appropriate to write down accounts of what has happened
11. Parents and pupils are required to co operate with the investigate and to assist the school in resolving the issue and restoring the relationship of the parties as quickly as possible

Step 2:

12. If it is deemed that bullying has occurred, all incidents of bullying are noted in the Appendix 3 Template for recording bullying behaviour which is kept for five years.
13. Parents or guardians of victims and bullies are informed by the principal or deputy principal as soon as possible of incidents so that they are given the opportunity to discuss the matter. They are then in a position to help and support their children before a crisis occurs. They are involved at an early stage





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14. Parents are expected to cooperate with the school's process and procedure for investigating incidents of bullying as laid out above and maintain a respectful, calm and non-aggressive approach
15. Parents/Guardians can make enquiries regarding incidents of bullying which they might suspect or that have come to their attention through their children or other parents/guardians to the class teacher, deputy principal or principal. We in St. Louis N.S., Rathkenny make clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
16. Individual teachers record and take appropriate measures regarding reports of bullying behaviour in accordance with the school's policy and code of behaviour and discipline.
17. Parents will be made aware of this behaviour and requested to come and discuss it with the teacher/principal with the view to resolving the problem.
18. It should be made clear to the bully that they have engaged in bullying behaviour and outlined how they have engaged in bullying behaviour and this is not acceptable in St Louis NS
19. It should be made clear to the bully that they are in breach of the school's anti bullying policy and code of behaviour. Every effort should be made to make him/her see the situation from the perspective of the victim.
20. The offending party will be deemed to have breached the school's Code of Conduct and sanctions will be applied
21. The situation will continue to be monitored to ensure that the problem has been resolved.

Step 3: Follow Up

22. The teacher must assess
 - If the bullying has ceased
 - Whether issues between the parties have been resolved
 - Whether the relationships have been restored
 - Any feedback from parties involved
23. Follow up meetings with the parties should be arranged
24. Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with the case, the parents will be referred to the parental complaint's procedure
25. If they have exhausted the parental complaints procedure, they must be informed that it is their right to go to the the Ombudsman for Children to make a complaint





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8. RECORDING AND RECORD KEEPING

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

The school procedure for this is as follows;

Informal, pre determination that bullying has occurred

- All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. Consideration needs to be given to where the records will be made e.g. incident book. All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher
- While all reported, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the teacher must keep a written record of the reports, actions taken and any discussion with those involved
- The relevant teacher must inform the principal of all incident being investigated

Formal Stage 1, determination that bullying has occurred

- If it is established that bullying has occurred, the teacher must keep appropriate written records

Formal Stage 2, appendix 3 (From DES Procedures and appendix 3 of this policy)

- The teacher must use the recording template at Appendix 3 to record the bullying behaviour
- a) in cases where it is deemed that bullying has occurred
- b) in cases where he/she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she determined that bullying behaviour occurred and
- c) where the school has decided as part of its antibullying policy that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal/Deputy Principal

9. COMPLAINT TOWARDS A STAFF MEMBER

In the case of a complaint regarding a staff member, this should normally in the first instance be raised with the staff member in question and follow the steps of the parental complaints procedure





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10. SUPPORTING PUPILS AFFECTED BY BULLYING

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

Class teachers and those on yard or other areas of supervision will monitor pupils' progress on an ongoing basis. If required, Special Educational Needs staff will facilitate opportunities to participate in activities such as friendship groups, social skills groups, or other practical projects to raise self-esteem and confidence.

A restorative approach will be used when dealing with conflicts that arise (Restorative Practice Questions)

Parents will also be informed of ongoing monitoring in school by school staff and will be asked for feedback from home.

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

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying involves discussing the incidents with the pupils, reassuring them that they were right to bring the events to the attention of staff. Pupils are reassured that they were right to tell and their actions will help others. They will be reminded that they should tell again if they have any new concerns. The teacher(s) involved and the principal will check from time to time with the child that everything is ok.

11. SUPERVISION AND MONITORING OF PUPILS

The Board of Management confirms that there is an appropriate arrival and dismissal policy in school. 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.

12. PREVENTION OF HARRASSMENT

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.





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This updated and revised Anti Bullying policy was adopted by the Board of Management on the **4th September 2024**

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to parents.

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.

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: *Fr Gerry Boyle*

Signed: *Laura Conaty*

Chairperson of Board of Management

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: 4th September 2024

Date: 4th September 2024

(Original Signature Page available in the school on display and in policy folder)





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APPENDIX ONE

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 <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools</i> ?	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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Has 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?	NO
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?	YES
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	YES

Signed: Fr Gerry Boyle

Signed: Laura Conaty

Chairperson of Board of Management

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: 4th September 2024

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APPENDIX TWO

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

To: WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

The Board of Management of St Louis NS 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 4th September 2024.
- 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: Fr Gerry Boyle

Signed: Laura Conaty

Chairperson of Board of Management

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: 4th September 2024

Date: 4th September 2024

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