



St Joseph's N.S. 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 N.S. 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 by the Department of Education and Skills.

Key Principles

The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact 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 promotes respectful relationships across the school community.
- (b) Effective leadership.
- (c) A school-wide approach.
- (d) A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact.
- (e) Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising) that build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils and explicitly addresses the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- (f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils.
- (g) Supports for staff.
- (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.

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, 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.

Examples of bullying behaviours

- Emotional – Being unfriendly, excluding, tormenting, threatening gestures etc.
 - Physical – Pushing, kicking, hitting, punching or any use of violence
 - Racist – Racial taunts, graffiti, gestures.
 - Sexual – Unwanted physical contact or sexually abusive comments.
 - Homophobic – Because of, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing.
 - Verbal – Name-calling, sarcasm, spreading rumours, teasing
 - Cyber – All areas of internet, such as email & social media misuse.
 - Mobile threats by text messaging and calling. Misuse of cameras, videos etc
 - This list of examples is non exhaustive. See Appendix 1 for a further list of bullying behaviour.
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Relevant Teacher/s for Investigating Bullying Incidents

The relevant teacher for investigating and dealing with bullying is the class teacher however any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

Education and Prevention

The education and prevention strategies (as well as strategies specifically aimed at cyber bullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school include:

- **School-wide approach**
 - Implementation of our Code of Behaviour which promotes a positive, pro-active, respectful and consistent approach to behaviour management.
 - Distribution of a summary copy of the Anti-Bullying Policy and Code of Behaviour to all parent(s)/guardian(s) when enrolling their children. (Note: Current copies are also available on the school website.)
 - Discussion of the school's anti-bullying policy with pupils.
 - Conducting an annual audit of professional development needs, at the beginning of each school year, with a view to assessing staff requirements
 - Whole staff professional development, through internal staff knowledge/expertise and external sources, as necessary, to ensure that all staff members develop an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and how to respond to it.
 - Implementing school wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying. This includes class lessons for pupils.
 - Promoting the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour through posters and class lessons.
 - Consistently recognising and rewarding positive behaviour.
 - Fostering and enhancing the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Providing pupils with opportunities to
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develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.

- Rigorous supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra- curricular activities. Encouraging non-teaching and ancillary staff to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers.
- The implementation of our “Acceptable Use of IT” policy and ensuring that new parents sign this.
- Using a Playground Friends system to encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- Encouraging a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders through use of Stay Safe Programme, Prime Ed resource books Bullying in a Cyber world and antibullyingcampaign.ie on-line resources.
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell and bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place. (This is achieved through using the Stay Safe Programme).
- Fully implementing our “Parent -Teacher Meeting” policy and promotion of teacher parent partnership.

Implementation of Curricula

- The full implementation of the SPHE, RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes e.g. Stay Safe Programme, Walk Tall Programme and Bullying in a Cyber World.
- Using Circle Time to enhance self-esteem and encourage open discussion
- Age-appropriate resources from the Professional Development Services for Teachers (PDST), Department of Education and Skills and others such as Web Wise, Primary Teachers’ Resources from Internet Safety Ireland,
- Facilitation of the Garda SPHE Programmes by Community Gardaí, covering issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying.
- Preparation and or follow-up lessons as necessary by Special Education Needs (SEN) teachers to address the additional needs of SEN pupils in understanding and implementing skills learned in class-based Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) programmes.
- Implementation of the advice in “Sexual Orientation advice for schools” (See Relationships and Sexuality Education Primary, booklet).
- Ensuring consistent implementation of other relevant policies including Child Protection, Supervision of pupils, Acceptable Use Policy, Parent–Teacher Meetings, Attendance, Health and Safety and the Code of Behaviour.

Procedures for Investigation, Follow-up and Recording

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 rather than to apportion blame. Every effort will be made through parents meetings and class lessons to ensure that all involved (pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s)) understand this approach from the outset. However, the child/children may also be subject to sanctions under the school’s Code of Behaviour.

Reporting Bullying Behaviour

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) 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;

Investigating and Dealing with Incidents

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) 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.
- 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.
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should seek answers to questions of **what, where, when, who and why**. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
- The No Blame & Shared Concerns approaches will be used.
- It may also be appropriate to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident/s.
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after the interview by the teacher.
- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the parties involved should 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 should give parent(s)/guardian(s) 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 should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
- The child/children who have engaged in bullying behaviour may also be subject to sanctions under the school's Code of Behaviour depending on the frequency or seriousness of the incident/s.
- It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parent s/guardians) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents/guardians and the school.

Follow up and Recording

- 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 parent(s)/guardian(s) or the school Principal or Deputy Principal.
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable. (Shared concern and no-blame approaches)
- Where a parent(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's Complaints Procedures.
- In the event that a parent(s)/guardian(s) has exhausted the school's Complaints Procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Recording of Bullying Behaviour

- 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 judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports.
- 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.
- At the end of the school year, the file can be viewed by the next class teacher.

Programme of Support

In-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying and perpetrators to support their social & emotional development i.e. to raise their self-esteem develop friendships and enhance social skills. Supports may include:

- Monitoring and one to one work with class teacher.
- Referral to the Care Team for monitoring and programme of support.
- Social skills/self esteem programme with SEN teacher.
- Buddy/Peer mentoring system.
- Group work such as Circle Time in class.
- Self-monitoring system such as daily diary, behaviour targets or star charts

If pupils require counselling or further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies i.e. CAMHS, Daughters of Charity, ISPCC, Barnardos to organise same. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or those involved in the bullying behaviour

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. These include consistent monitoring and supervision of behaviour, involvement of the school's Care Team in areas of concern and a clear Acceptable Use policy for IT.

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.

Access to Policy

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and is available in hard copy on request from parents. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the Patron if requested.

Review

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 and published on the school website. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the Patron and the Department.

This Policy was adopted by the Board of Management on

Signed: _____
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _____
(Principal)

Date: _____

Date: _____

Review: _____
Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: _____

Review: _____
Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: _____