



# St. Patrick's N.S. Anti-Bullying Policy

**1.** In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by Tusla and the child protection and Safeguarding Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2023, the Board of Management of St. Patrick'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 which were published in September 2013. It aims to produce a safe and caring environment in which all children can develop to their full potential.

**2.** The Board of Management and staff 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,
- promotes respectful relationships across the school community,
- teachers use Incredible Years classroom management strategies to promote children's social, emotional and academic competence.

## **(b) Effective leadership**

- The BOM has overall responsibility to ensure that this policy is effective, sustainable and measured.
- The principal and staff have a clear role to act in a leadership capacity within the school community, stimulating a whole school approach to preventing and tackling bullying, and also modelling best practice.

## **(c) A school-wide approach**

- A whole school approach to the problem of bullying is required and in St Patrick's N.S., the school community comprises BOM, teachers, non-teaching staff, pupils and parents.

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

- St. Patrick's N.S. endeavours to put in place appropriate systems to ensure that ALL relevant members of the school community (parents, pupils, staff and the wider community) have a shared understanding of what constitutes bullying behaviour as defined in this policy (*Section 2&3 of Anti Bullying Procedures for Primary & Post Primary Schools*)

**(e) Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that-**

- build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils
- explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including, in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying;
- facilitate effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;

**(f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils**

- Staff members have a distinct responsibility to ensure that supervision of pupils in class is effective and consistent
- Supervision in playground areas will be managed and conducted effectively.

**(g) Supports for staff**

- Regular discussion and review of policy and procedures is essential to support staff on a continuous basis
- CPD in relation to Anti Bullying Strategies will be supported and encouraged for all members of 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 of Bullying:**

**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 conduct, 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 will 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.

Any negative behaviour that does not meet with this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with our school's Code of Behaviour.

### Examples of bullying behaviours

<p><b>General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc.</li> <li>• Physical aggression</li> <li>• Damage to property</li> <li>• Name calling</li> <li>• Slagging</li> <li>• The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person</li> <li>• Offensive graffiti</li> <li>• Extortion</li> <li>• Intimidation</li> <li>• Insulting or offensive gestures</li> <li>• The "look"</li> <li>• Invasion of personal space</li> <li>• A combination of any of the types listed.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cyber-bullying</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Denigration:</b> Spreading rumours, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation</li> <li>• <b>Harassment:</b> Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual</li> <li>• <b>Impersonation:</b> Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name</li> <li>• <b>Flaming:</b> Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight</li> <li>• <b>Trickery:</b> Fooling someone into sharing personal information which is then posted online</li> <li>• <b>Outing:</b> Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images</li> <li>• <b>Exclusion:</b> Purposefully excluding someone from an online group</li> <li>• <b>Cyber stalking:</b> Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety</li> <li>• Silent telephone/mobile phone call</li> <li>• Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls</li> <li>• Abusive text messages</li> <li>• Abusive email</li> <li>• Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/ Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles</li> <li>• Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Abusive posts on any form of communication technology</li> </ul>
<b>Identity Based Behaviours</b> 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).	
<b>Homophobic and Transgender</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation</li> <li>Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation</li> <li>Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian...used in a derogatory manner</li> <li>Physical intimidation or attacks</li> <li>Threats</li> </ul>
<b>Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background</li> <li>Exclusion on the basis of any of the above</li> </ul>
<b>Relational</b>	<p>This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Malicious gossip</li> <li>Isolation &amp; exclusion</li> <li>Ignoring</li> <li>Excluding from the group</li> <li>Taking someone's friends away</li> <li>"Bitching"</li> <li>Spreading rumours</li> <li>Breaking confidence</li> <li>Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear</li> <li>The "look"</li> <li>Use or terminology such as 'nerd' in a derogatory way</li> </ul>
<b>Sexual</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching</li> <li>Harassment</li> </ul>
<b>Special Educational Needs, Disability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Name calling</li> <li>Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs</li> <li>Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying</li> <li>Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues.</li> <li>Mimicking a person's disability</li> <li>Setting others up for ridicule</li> </ul>

#### 4. Relevant Teachers for investigating bullying

All teachers are the relevant teacher for investigating and dealing with bullying in this school.

Anti-Bullying Co-ordinators: Principal and Deputy Principal

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.
- Positive reinforcement by teachers in classroom setting e.g. golden time, stars, stickers, stamps, lucky dips, recognition of individual work and group work, stamp books.
- Modelling of respectful behaviours and language by teachers and staff.
- Rewarding incidents of good and improved behaviour and showing acts of kindness at class and whole-school level through recognition and awards.
- 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.
- Professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teacher(s).
- School wide awareness raising on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community. Cyber –bullying workshop for pupils and parents. Friendship week in the first term with a focus on the Stay Safe lessons on the theme of Friendship and Bullying. Identifying the value of friendship and treating each other with respect. Recognising what bullying is and is not and how to deal with bullying behaviour and the impacts of such.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular 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 parent(s)/guardian(s) are informed that this policy is available on the school website.
- The implementation of regular bullying student surveys.
- Encourage a culture of telling – teachers should reinforce the message that if any pupil is the victim of bullying behaviour, they should tell an adult. Pupils will be reassured that if they tell, all reported incidents will be investigated.
- Bystanders can be the key to resolving bullying and if anyone witnesses bullying behaviour, they should always tell a teacher. It will 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.
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.:
  - Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
  - Hand note up with homework.
  - Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on a pupil's behalf.
  - Administer a confidential questionnaire regularly to all pupils.
  - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.

- Parent(s)/guardian(s) are encouraged to approach the school (either the class teacher or the principal) if they suspect that their child is being bullied.
- The implementation of the Acceptable Use Policy in the school will ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored. The pupils' use of mobile phones is forbidden in the school (with one exception on medical grounds; where the phone is handed up to the class teacher for the school day).

#### **Implementation of curricula**

- The full implementation of the SPHE curriculum and the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- Lessons on internet safety every second year in the senior room from an outside speaker.
- Delivery of the Garda Education Programmes where possible.
- The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately including completion of "My thoughts about School" questionnaire.

#### **Links to other policies**

- The following policies are particularly relevant to bullying;  
The Code of Behaviour, Child Protection policy, Supervision of pupils policy, Acceptable Use policy, SPHE policy, SEN 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:

#### **Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying**

**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 to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s)) understand this approach from the outset.

#### **Stage 1**

##### **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. If the teacher suspects that bullying occurred the teacher should complete the 'template for recording bullying behaviour' Appendix 3. This form should then be passed to the Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.
- In some cases, it may be prudent to allow a short time lapse and then seek clarification of details prior to any investigation.

## Investigating and dealing with incidents

- 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. If the teacher suspects that bullying occurred the teacher should complete the 'template for recording bullying behaviour' Appendix 3. This form should then be passed to the Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator.
- 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.

## **Stage 2**

### Interviewing Process

- Teachers will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.
- All interviews will 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, incidents will be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- Where possible, a witness will be present.
- Any notes taken will be brief, factual and should be void of emotional, or judgmental language.
- Interview pupils who may be directly/indirectly involved seeking answers to questions of what, why, where, when and who.
- Interview pupils individually at first and thereafter all those involved should be met as a group.
- Each member of a group will be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after the interview by the teacher;
- Sometimes, it may be appropriate to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident/s.
- The relevant teacher will then exercise his /her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved. At this stage, if it is deemed bullying, Appendix 3 will be completed and a copy must be provided to the Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator.
- 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 will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (in line with the school policy). The school will 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 will 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.
- **It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parent(s)/guardian(s)) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school.**

### **Stage 3**

#### **Follow Up and Resolution**

- 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.
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved will 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.
- 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
- 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**

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:

##### **Informal- pre-determination that bullying has occurred**

- All staff keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them in the incident book kept in the office. All incidents will be reported to the relevant teacher.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. She will keep a written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding the same.
- The relevant teacher will inform the 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.
- The relevant teacher/s will place all records in the office filing cabinet at the end of the school year.

### **Formal Stage 2-Appendix 3 (From DES Procedures)**

The relevant teacher will use the recording template at **Appendix 3** to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

- 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 bullying behaviour occurred; and
- In very serious incidents of bullying behaviour, an Appendix 3 must be filled and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.
- The recording template will be filled out by the relevant teacher in question and a copy given to the principal. These records will be kept in the pupil's file for the duration of that pupil's time in the school and the second copy will be retained in a file dedicated to Appendix 3 records in the locked filing cabinet. This copy will always be kept. Access to such records is limited to principal and relevant teachers.

### **Established intervention strategies**

- Teacher interviews with all pupils. Interviews to be conducted in line with restorative practice.
- Interview questionnaires.
- Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress.
- Working with parent(s)/guardian(s) to support school interventions.
- Circle Time
- Social skills groups

## **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.
  - Friends for Life
  - Walk Tall programme
  - Stay Safe programme
  - Friendship week
  - Group work such as circle time
- If pupils require counselling or further support the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise the 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 has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website [www.crownestownns.ie](http://www.crownestownns.ie). and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

**11.** 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.

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management on 5<sup>th</sup> November 2024

Signed: Seamus Ó hÉanaigh  
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: Cornel Morpe  
(Principal)

Date: 5/11/2024.

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Date of next review: November 2025