

Anti- Bullying Policy

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. Joseph's N.S., Boyerstown 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**.

**THIS POLICY MUST BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE SCHOOLS
OVERALL CODE OF BEHAVIOUR AND EXISTING ANTI BULLYING
MEASURES AND PROCEDURES.**

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 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; and
- 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 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;

(f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils

(g) Supports for staff

(h) Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour

(i) 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:

WHAT IS BULLYING?

Bullying is deliberate, hurtful, unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physically 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 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.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying in accordance with the Anti -Bullying Procedures for Primary & Post Primary Schools – section 6:7.6, 6:7.7 - are as follows:

- Principal
- Deputy Principal
- Class teachers

5. Education and Prevention Strategies

The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school (Ref: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 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.
- Whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develops an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it-prevention and intervention.
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parents/guardians and the wider school community.
- 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. Buddy system, mentoring, Lunchtime Buddies and other student support activities that can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school-to be displayed publicly in classrooms and in common areas of the school.
- The implementation of regular (e.g. per year) whole school awareness measures e.g. a dedicated notice board in the school and classrooms on the promotion of friendship, and bullying prevention; annual Anti bullying Week and parents/guardians seminars organised by P/A.;
- Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance

of bystanders. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should 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.
 - Make a phone call to the school
 - Anti-bully or Worry box?
 - Get a parent/guardian or friend to tell on your behalf.
 - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.

Implementation of curricula

- The full implementation of the SPHE and the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes
- Religious Education Programme
- Code of Behaviour
- Walk Tall Programme
- Implementation of 'Friends for Life', 'Get up, Stand Up', 'Incredible Years' programmes, should staff training opportunity arise.
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes at primary level. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardai, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying
- 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.
- The school will consider the implementation of advice in "Sexual Orientation advice for schools" (RSE Primary, see booklet) .

Links to other policies

Hereunder is a List of school policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to bullying:

- Code of Behaviour
- Child Protection Policy,
 - Acceptable Use policy,
 - Attendance Strategy
 - Out of School Trips Policy
 - School Tours Policy
 - Health and Safety Statement

6. 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, parents/guardians) understand this approach from the outset.

- Pupils should discuss any incident of bullying with a teacher or another trusted adult in the school. This is responsible behaviour rather than 'telling tales'.
- Parents/Guardians should contact the teacher regarding incidents of bullying behaviour which they might suspect or that might have come to their attention through their children or other parents.
- Incidents of bullying behaviour, no matter how trivial which are drawn to the attention of a teacher will be dealt with in the following manner:
 1. Teacher will interview all of the pupils individually that are involved in a bullying incident.
 2. The alleged victim and alleged perpetrators of the incident will be spoken to and encouraged to solve the problem.
 3. All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of pupils involved
 4. Records will be kept of all incidents and the procedures that were followed.
 5. Parents/Guardians of the victim and the perpetrator/perpetrators will be informed of the outcome of the matter.
 6. The teacher may consult with the Principal or Vice-Principal on bullying incidents that arise.
 7. Reports on bullying incidents may be passed from teacher to teacher to assist in monitoring a recurrence of incidents.
 8. Where the incident is deemed to be minor, a verbal warning will be given to the offender to stop the inappropriate behaviour, pointing out how they are in breach of school policy and trying to get him/her to see the situation from the victim's point of view. The Offender is to issue verbal/written apology.
 9. Where a serious incident of bullying has been proven to have occurred, the Parents/Guardians of the perpetrator(s) and those of the child who

is allegedly being bullied will be invited to the school to meet the Principal and/or Deputy Principal.

10. Sanctions will include:

- A contract of good behaviour
- Withdrawal of privileges
- Suspension
- Expulsion

11. In case of a complaint regarding a staff member this should be referred immediately to the Principal.

12. Where cases, relating to pupil or teacher, remain unresolved at school level, the matter should be referred in writing to the School Board of Management.

13. In order to appeal a decision, a parent/pupil may request a review by writing to the Principal.

14. If the teacher does not consider the bullying behaviour to have been adequately dealt with within 20 days after she/he has determined that bullying behaviour occurred, it must be reported in Appendix 1.

The recording template must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal.

7. Supporting Children Affected by Bullying
(Ref 6:8:16 of Procedures):

- SPHE Lessons
- Stay Safe Programme
- Walk Tall
- NEPS programmes on www.neps.ie
- Anti Bullying Week
- Buddy system
- Care Team Support inc Social Skills Group
 - Group work such as circle time

- If pupils require counselling or further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. **NEPS will also be contacted for advice**
- 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.

- There are agreed supervision and monitoring practices in the school
- Bullying danger spots have been identified as the playground, area by pre-school, front exit area, toilets, and corridors, school tours/trips, after school activities and swimming lessons.
- Parents and pupils have been consulted in the identification of these danger spots
- In relation to Acceptable Use Policy in the school the following issues are addressed:
 - All Internet sessions are supervised by a teacher
 - The school regularly monitor pupils' Internet usage within school time.
 - Pupils been instructed to access only those discussion forums and messaging or other electronic communication fora that have been approved by the school?

(Note that the Schools Broadband Programme has blocked all social networking sites on the basis that they waste time and take up too much of the bandwidth which is been provided for educational purposes only).

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.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management at a meeting held on _____.

This policy has been made available to school personnel, and is readily accessible to parents and pupils on request 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 school personnel, published on the school website and be readily accessible to parents and pupils on request 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: _____
(Chairperson of BOM)

Signed: _____
(Principal)

Date: _____

Date: _____