

St. Patrick's De La Salle Boys' National School

Anti-Bullying Policy

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB/TUSLA, the Board of Management of **St. Patrick's De La Salle Boys' National School** 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.

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 non-threatening 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;
- 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.

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, 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.

The class teacher will have primary responsibility for investigating alleged cases of bullying. However, dependent on the seriousness of the actions involved, the class teacher may decide to involve the Principal. Where an alleged incident of bullying involves students from a number of classes, the class teacher will liaise with the Principal to carry out the investigation. The primary aim will be to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame).

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

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.

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 an adult. 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".

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 or to a trusted teacher in the school.
- Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
- Administer a confidential questionnaire to all pupils.
- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.

We will raise pupils' awareness and understanding of bullying, including its causes and effects, taking particular account of the needs of pupils with disabilities or with SEN. Approaches to decreasing the likelihood of bullying for pupils with SEN will include improving inclusion, focusing on developing social skills, paying attention to key moments such as transitioning from primary to post-primary and cultivating a good school culture which has respect for all and helping one another as central.

We will use the elements of the SPHE curriculum which make specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the inter-related areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships. The Stay Safe programme is a personal safety skills programme which seeks to enhance children's self-protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying.

We will use all subjects to foster an attitude of respect for all: to promote the value of diversity; to address prejudice and stereotyping and to highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.

An anti-bullying awareness assembly will be organised in the first term of the year to raise awareness of issues involved with bullying e.g. racial issues, cyber bullying etc.

Good supervisory and monitoring measures will be put in place both to prevent and deal with bullying behaviour.

The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and is accessible to all parent(s)/guardian(s) on our school website.

The Board of Management will make appropriate arrangements to ensure that temporary and substitute staff have sufficient awareness of the school's code of behaviour and its anti-bullying policy.

Key Measures re Cyber Bullying

Staff will endeavour to identify signs of cyber bullying and to keep informed about the technologies that children commonly use.

Advice will be communicated to help students protect themselves from being involved in bullying (as perpetrator or as victim) and to advise them on reporting any incidents.

Students will be informed about cyber bullying in the course of their education.

Pupil mobile phones are not allowed.

Teachers will dedicate a standalone lesson to deal with the issue of cyber bullying.

Students and staff are expected to comply with the school's policy on the use of computers in the School. (cf Acceptable Use Policy)

Parents will be provided with information and advice on cyber bullying and will be advised that it is illegal for a child under 13 to register with and use many social media networks, including Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat.

The school's internet is filtered by the schools broadband service which endeavours to block access to inappropriate web sites, apps etc.

No pupil is allowed to work on the Internet in the Computer Room, or any other location within the school, without a member of staff present

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:

1. All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the class teacher. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. 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. Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the class teacher. Where there has been a report of an incident during break time involving students in one class the class teacher will investigate. However, this does not have to be done directly after break. It may be more appropriate to get the class settled and working and then investigate the issue. If a number of classes are involved the teacher can liaise with the Principal to help in any investigation.

2. 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.

3. Parents 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.
4. When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the teacher will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This will be done in a calm manner, setting an example of dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
5. Incidents will generally be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
6. If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved will be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member will be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements.
7. Each member of a group will be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher.
8. Where appropriate, those involved will be asked to write down their account of the incident(s).
9. In cases where it has been determined by the class teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred a standard reporting form will be completed and the Principal will be informed of the details of the investigation. Parents of the pupil engaging in the bullying behaviour and parents of the pupil being bullied will be informed in writing.
10. It will be made clear to a pupil engaged in bullying behaviour that he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts will be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
11. It will be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school.
12. If appropriate, 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.
13. In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it will be recorded by the relevant teacher in the recording template and the parents of the pupil engaging in the bullying behaviour will be requested to meet with the teacher and Principal.
14. 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:

- a. Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased.
- b. Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable.
- c. Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable.
- d. Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal.

15. Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents will be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures. If having exhausted these procedures the parent is still not satisfied, the school will advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Procedures for recording bullying behaviour

All records must be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour is as follows:

(i) The class teacher will use his/her professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of all reports of bullying, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same. If it is established by the class teacher that bullying has occurred, he/she will 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.

(ii) The relevant teacher will use the template to record the bullying behaviour. This form will be passed to Principal and held on file. In cases where the bullying has been resolved the template form will serve as a summary of the investigation. However, where appropriate, additional notes and details will be attached to the form to retain on file, particularly in cases where the bullying was not resolved within 20 days of the initial investigation. It should also be noted that the timeline for recording bullying behaviour in this recording template does not in any way preclude the relevant teacher from consulting the Principal at an earlier stage in relation to a case.

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.

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 on _____.

This policy will be 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.

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: _____
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: _____
Principal

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____