

Anti-Bullying Policy

**St. Andrew's
National School**

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. Andrew's 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.

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 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 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.

3. In accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* bullying is defined as follows:

“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 do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of 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. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:
 - The class teacher(s) initially
 - The principal thereafter if necessary
5. The following education and prevention strategies, at the appropriate and relevant level for each class, will be used by the school:
 - Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.
 - Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
 - Notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
 - Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school - this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN.
 - Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour

and respectful language are absent.

- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.
- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.
- Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use.
- Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.
- Actively involve parents and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media.
- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.
- Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.
- All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- Ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.
- Teach strategies to engage pupils in addressing problems when they arise. Such strategies need to build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils.
- There are a number of curriculum components and programmes which are particularly relevant to the prevention of bullying and the promotion of respect for diversity and inclusiveness. The SPHE curriculum makes specific provision for exploring bullying as well as inter-related areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships. The Stay Safe and RSE programmes are personal safety skills programmes which seek to enhance children's self-protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying.

6. The school's procedures for investigating, 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:

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). With this in mind the schools procedures are as follows:

- (i) In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher(s) will exercise his/her/their professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred, what type if it has and how best the situation might be resolved
- (ii) All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher(s). 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
- (iii) Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs) and caretakers must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher
- (iv) 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
- (v) It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset
- (vi) Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents
- (vii) Initial investigations of bullying will be done in class where possible but some incidents might be best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved
- (viii) 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
- (ix) When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher(s) 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
- (x) If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements

- (xi) Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face them from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher
- (xii) Where the relevant teacher(s) has/have 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
- (xiii) It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s)
- (xiv) In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher(s) that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken. The school should give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils
- (xv) It must also 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
- (xvi) Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved may be arranged separately with a view to bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable
- (xvii) An additional follow up meeting with parents of the children involved may take place after an appropriate time to ensure that the matter has been resolved satisfactorily
- (xviii) Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures
- (xix) In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Recording: Noting and recording of bullying behaviour is to be documented using the *template for recording bullying behaviour* (Appendix 1). All records must be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. The school's procedure for noting and reporting bullying behaviour will adhere to the following:

- While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher(s), the relevant teacher(s) will use his/her/their professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same
 - If it is established by the relevant teacher(s) that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher(s) 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) must use the recording template at Appendix 1 to record the bullying behaviour
7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying involves a whole school approach. Given the complexity of bullying behaviour, no one intervention/support programme works in all situations. Therefore various approaches and intervention strategies may be used.
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 was adopted by the Board of Management on _____

11. This policy has been 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.

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 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 the Board of Management)

Date: _____

Signed: _____
(Principal)

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____

Appendix 1: Template for recording bullying behaviour

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group:

Name: _____ Class: _____

2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) thought to have engaged in bullying behaviour

3. Source of bullying concern/report - tick relevant box(es)

Pupil concerned	
Other pupil(s)	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

4. Location of incidents - tick relevant box(es)

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
Other	

5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern

6. Type of bullying behaviour - tick relevant box(es)

Physical aggression		Name calling	
Damage to property		Intimidation	
Isolation/exclusion		Malicious gossip	
Cyber bullying		Other (specify)	

7. Brief description of bullying behaviour and its impact

8. Details of action taken

Signed: _____(Teacher) Date: _____

Signed: _____(Teacher) Date: _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal: _____

Appendix 2: How you would know if your child is being bullied and how to help

In St. Andrew's N.S. we teach the Stay Safe Programme to teach the children about bullying and how to deal with it. The following information is taken from The Stay Safe website. It has been slightly adapted to fit in with our Anti-Bullying Policy

The following *may* be indications that your child is being bullied. It's important to bear in mind, however, that many 'signs' of bullying can also be signs of other difficulties. No *one* sign on its *own* should be seen as absolute proof that bullying has occurred. It's important to investigate unexplained changes in your child's behaviour.

If your child is being bullied he or she may . . .

- Be unusually anxious, nervous or tense
- Develop sleeping problems, such as nightmares, bed-wetting, sleeplessness
- Develop eating problems
- Have unexplained bruises, scratches, etc.
- Come home regularly with books, clothes or other possessions damaged or missing
- Constantly ask for or steal money (to pay a bully)
- Begin to bully others
- Become reluctant to go to school, to go out to play or to continue with other usual activities
- Become reluctant to walk to or from school or other activities
- Show a deterioration in school performance
- Become isolated or withdrawn
- Become anxious or evasive when asked if he or she has a problem

Children may make excuses for any of the above.

What can you do if you suspect that your child is being bullied:

Ask: It's often not easy for children to tell, so it's important to ask your child about bullying. Let them know that they can tell you if they have a problem.

Listen: Listen to what your child tells you. If your child feels that he/she is being bullied, acknowledge this.

Talk: Discuss the problem with your child and how it might be resolved. Your child should not be encouraged to retaliate as there may be a risk of injury. Help your child to understand that bullying is wrong and that victims should never blame themselves when bullying takes place.

Get Help: Identify the places where the bullying is taking place. If the bullying is taking place in school, talk to the class teacher. It may help to make an appointment. It is important to have your facts straight before raising the issue with the school. If the bullying is taking place in a club or group that your child attends, talk to the group leader. Explain to the teacher or group leader what has been happening and how your child feels. Discuss with them how you might work together to stop the bullying.

The school will work from their Anti - Bullying Policy to resolve the issue.

Enlist the help of friends to support your child - invite friends in to play or on family outings.

What can you do if your child is a bully?

Talk to your child and try to find out what the problem is. Children who are prepared to admit being involved, will find it much easier to get the problem solved and change their behaviour. They should be encouraged to do this.

Don't punish bullying by being a bully yourself. Hitting or shouting at the child will make the situation worse. It is important that the child feels that your support will help solve the problem.

Children who bully are often ashamed when the truth is discovered and will need reassurance that you will help re-establish their standing with others in a way that creates good will all round.

Some young people may not realise that they are bullying. Others deliberately set out to hurt. Let the child know that it's wrong to bully. Explain how the victim feels. Try to get your child to understand the victim's point of view

Contact your child's teacher/principal and let them know about the problem. Parents and teachers working together can help the child. Other people who care for your child may also be able to help with this problem.

Appendix 3: Advice for a child who is being bullied:

In St. Andrew's N.S. we teach the Stay Safe Programme to teach the children about bullying and how to deal with it. The following information is taken from The Stay Safe website. It has been slightly adapted to fit in with our Anti-Bullying Policy.

Practical advice you can give your child if he or she is bullied

Tell your child to...

- Avoid situations where he or she may be alone with the bully
- Avoid situations where he or she may be confronted by the bully
- Walk away smartly if you see him/them approaching.
- Tell a parent or teacher about any bullying - even if the bullying is against someone else
- Remember the Stay Safe rules: Say 'No' - get away and tell an adult who can help.
- Teaching your child the following self-help strategies would be useful in situations where contact with the bully is unavoidable.
- Not crying or showing temper - this is frequently what the bully wants to see
- Standing up straight and trying to look confident
- Speaking firmly, clearly and slowly
- Looking the bully in the eye and saying 'No'.
- Developing a response to nicknames at home, such as laughing off slagging or casual taunts can be very helpful

Most children, with a little help, overcome this problem quickly

Appendix 4 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> ?	
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	
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?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	
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?	
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	
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?	
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	

Signed: _____
(Chairperson, Board of Management)

Date: _____

Signed: _____
(Principal)

Date: _____

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

To: _____

The Board of Management of St.Andrew's N.S. wishes to inform you that:

o The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of _____[date].

o 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: _____
(Chairperson, Board of Management)

Date: _____

Signed: _____
(Principal)

Date: _____