

St. Mary's P.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 National Educational Welfare Board [NEWB], the Board of Management of St. Mary's P.S. Enfield 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, 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; involves collaboration among and between staff & pupils 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 ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

Definition of Bullying

In accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures 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
- ✓ 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 and appears as Appendix 1 of this document.

In the context of this policy, placing a once-off 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.

Roles and Responsibilities

All members of the school community have a role to play in the prevention of bullying. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:

- The class teacher(s) initially
- The principal thereafter if necessary
- If a short-term sub is in the class the relevant support teacher should be contacted for advice

Responsibilities of the Board of Management

- To ensure that all members of the school community are enabled to deal effectively with bullying
- To provide time and resources for the implementation of the policy.
- To ensure that proper supervisory and monitoring measures are in place to prevent bullying and to deal with incidents appropriately as they arise.

Responsibilities of School Staff

- To acknowledge that bullying is a shared responsibility within the school. This includes non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers, cleaners who are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher
- To implement prevention and intervention strategies which build and maintain a safe learning environment for the whole school community
- To empower students to deal with conflict in constructive ways
- To take all reports of bullying seriously and to report them to the Principal if warranted
- To document any serious bullying incidents using the Bullying Incident Report Form [see Appendix 2]
- To take a calm, unemotional, problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents



Responsibilities of Pupils

- To show consideration, respect and support towards others
- To be able to identify bullying behaviour
- To not bully others
- To tell if they are being bullied or if they see someone else being bullied
- To engage in responsible reporting when witnessing or experiencing bullying behaviour
- To cooperate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved

Responsibilities of Parents

- To support the school in the implementation of the policy
- To watch out for signs that their child may be being bullied and to speak to the class teacher if their child is being bullied or they suspect that this is happening
- To speak to the class teacher as soon as they are aware that issues are arising which are affecting their child
- To encourage their child to tell if they are being bullied or if they have seen other pupils being bullied
- To notify the school if they think that their child is displaying bullying behaviour and to work with the school in addressing this problem. They should not defer letting the school know of any issue, in the hope that the problem will go away
- To ensure that if their children are online using social media or other online forums that they are doing so in a safe and responsible manner
- To never directly approach a student, or the parent of a student, to intervene in school related behavioural issues

Education and Prevention

The following education and prevention strategies, at the appropriate and relevant level for each class, will be used by the school. Note these prevention and awareness raising measures, across all aspects of bullying, involve strategies to engage pupils in addressing problems when they arise and to build empathy, respect and resilience in our pupils.

In St. Mary's school-wide approach, we:

- Adopt a “Playground Friends” system where children in senior classes teach and play with children in junior classes at playtime on the yard to support younger pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support. Children can also play in “Friendly Fours” to ensure all children have a peer to play with.
- Undergo the development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school-displayed publicly in the downstairs corridor of the school.
- Fully implement our “Parent -Teacher Meeting” policy and promotion of teacher parent partnership.
- Implement regular whole school awareness measures, including posters and messages of positivity in the reception area and other public areas of the school and in year group assemblies.
- Ensure 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 in with homework.
 - Worry box in the classroom.
 - Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
- Teach the pupils to recognise bullying behaviour and encourage them to use their voice to say ‘no’ to such behaviour.
- Use annual student surveys on bullying to identify problems [in senior classes]
- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Explicitly teach school rules and our “Golden Rules” in child friendly language and display and highlight school rules in the classroom and in the playground.
- Catch the pupils being good; noticing and acknowledging desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- Use a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines such as “Stars of the Week” and rewarding the classes who have stayed out of the Yard Discipline Book each month.
- Engage in Continuous Professional Development for Staff in delivering Anti-Bullying programmes.
- Are involved in visits from the Community Garda as part of the Garda Schools Programme to senior classes, covering issues such as personal safety and cyber-bullying.



- Fully implement the SPHE curriculum and Walk Tall programme in our school promoting the personal development and well-being of pupils. We also dedicate time to focusing on the issues around bullying including conflict resolution, friendship, safety and, relationships.
- Run the RSE and Stay Safe programmes in alternative years to ensure that pupils are afforded the opportunity to explore all strand units of the SPHE Curriculum in their entirety.
- Implement the Webwise Primary Programme to support the teaching of internet safety. The Webwise Anti-Cyber Bullying Primary Pack is also adopted in St. Mary's.
- Participate in the "Friends First" Programme with Senior Infants and 5th Class.
- Use Circle Time to enhance self-esteem and encourage open discussion.
- Celebrate "Safer Internet Day" in order to highlight positive online communications and behaviour. The rules of online safety are displayed in the upstairs corridor.
- Work with children with SEN in Social Groups and provide them with opportunities to react and respond to bullying in a structured setting. SEN pupils who need more time to explore the concepts in SPHE lessons and/or more opportunities to develop strategies and skills needed for their protection are revisited by resource/ learning support teachers in a small group situation.
- Actively involve the pupils in formulating classroom rules and sanctions for those found to be in breach of the rules.
- Participate in Teacher observation for discovering the dynamics at work in various groups in the classroom and therefore providing a more comprehensive method of dealing with negative behaviour and maximising constructive behaviour.
- Celebrate our "Friendship Week" annually, with assemblies, Friendship detectives, Peer Mentors, Parent Homework and many other activities to promote friendship and positive relationships.
- Celebrate "International Day", which is hosted by the Parents Association to celebrate the variety of cultures and nationalities in our school community

This work will be extended into many other areas, such as Art, Drama, Religious Education and Physical Education. Co-operation and group enterprise can be promoted through team sports, school clubs and societies as well as through practical subjects. Sporting activities in particular can provide excellent opportunities for channelling and learning how to control aggression. GAA and soccer coaching, from outside agencies, is offered to some classes, and teachers are also involved in coaching the school's soccer and gaelic teams.

This policy is linked with other policies in the school e.g. Code of Behaviour, Supervision, Mobile Phone policy, Child Protection, Acceptable Use policy



Investigation

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). 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:-

(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) Initial investigations of bullying will generally be done in class where possible but some incidents might be best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.

(iv) 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.

(v) When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher(s) will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This will be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.

(vi) If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first. Subsequently, if appropriate, 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. It is important that each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group, after interview by the teacher. It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s).

(vii) Where the relevant teacher(s) has/have 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 will be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.

(viii) In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher(s) that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken. The school will give parents an opportunity to discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils.

(ix) 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;



(x) Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved may 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.

(xi) 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.

(xii) 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.

(xiii) In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school will advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Recording

The school's procedures for noting and recording bullying behaviour are detailed below. All records will be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation.

(i) **Informal:** All reports, including anonymous reports, of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher(s). The relevant teacher(s) will enter a note into the Aladdin system [the school's administration software package] with details of the report and any action taken. The relevant teacher(s) will use his/her/their professional judgement to determine what further action, if any, is required.

(ii) **Formal Stage 1:** If it is established by the relevant teacher(s) that bullying has occurred, *the template for recording bullying behaviour* (Appendix 2) will be used to record the bullying incident. A note will also be entered into the Aladdin system. These will assist the teacher(s) efforts to resolve the issue and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved. A copy of Appendix 2 will be placed in the child's file in the classroom and a photocopy given to the principal. If the matter is resolved there is no need for further actions or sanctions.

(iii) **Formal Stage 2:** If after completing Formal Stage 1, the matter is unresolved or the bullying behaviour warrants a disciplinary sanction, then the sanction will be imposed in line with the school's Code of Behaviour policy, which classes bullying as a serious misbehaviour [steps 5-7 on behaviour checklist]. A second copy of Appendix 2 will be placed in the child's file in the classroom and a photocopy given to the principal.

Note serious instances of bullying behaviour will, in accordance with the **Children First and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools**, be referred to the Child and Family Agency [TUSLA] and/or Gardaí as appropriate.

Support

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, including:-

- Monitoring and one to one work with class teacher
- Social skills/self-esteem programme with SEN teacher
- Possible referral to CAMHS or seek advice from NEPS
- Buddy/Peer mentoring system
- Whole class work e.g. lessons from “Jenny Mosley Circle Time” programme
- Group work such as Circle Time in class
- Self-monitoring system such as daily diary, behaviour targets or star charts
- Developing a behaviour plan in conjunction with child, parents, class teacher and SEN teacher

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 the 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.

Implementation and Review

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management for the start of the 2014 – 2015 school year.

This policy is available to school personnel, to the Parents Association and to parents on request. 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 a school year using the checklist in Appendix 3. Written notification that the review has been completed is available to the relevant parties on request.

Anne Maher

Chairperson of Board of Management

March 2017

Reviewed annually



APPENDIX 1: Examples of Bullying Behaviours

Name Calling	Referring to : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name calling referring to physical appearance, e.g. size or clothes worn, Accent or distinctive voice characteristics , Academic ability. • Slagging
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical aggression • Pushing • Shoving • Punching • Kicking • Poking • Tripping people • Severe physical assault • Invasion of personal space
Intimidation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The “look” • Very aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon • Facial expression which conveys aggression and/or dislike • Insulting or offensive gestures • The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person
Isolation/exclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliberately isolating, excluding or ignoring by some or all • Writing insulting remarks about a pupil in public places • Passing around notes about or drawings a pupil • Whispering insults loud enough to be heard. • Repeatedly rejecting or undermining a person’s attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers • Control: ‘Do this or I won’t be your friend anymore’(implied or stated) • A group ganging up against one person • Non-verbal gesturing • Malicious gossip • Spreading rumours about a person • The ‘silent treatment’.
Cyber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denigration: Spreading rumors, lies or gossip to hurt a person’s reputation • Harassment: Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual • Impersonation: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person’s name • Flaming: Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight • Trickery: Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online • Outing: Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images • Exclusion: Purposefully excluding someone from an online group • Cyber stalking: Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a



	<p>person considerable fear for his/her safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Silent telephone/mobile phone call •Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls •Abusive text messages •Abusive email •Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Snapchat/ Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles •Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures •Abusive posts on any form of communication technology
<p>Damage to property</p>	<p>Damage to :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clothing • Mobile phone or other devices • School books and other learning material • Interference with a pupil's property • Scattering contents of school bags and pencil cases on the floor. • Defacing items of personal property • Hiding someone's property • Offensive graffiti
<p>Extortion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demands for money, often accompanied by threats • Being forced into theft of property
<p>Identity Based Behaviours 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).</p>	
<p>Homophobic and Transgender</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation •Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation •Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian...used in a derogatory manner •Physical intimidation or attacks •Threats
<p>Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background •Exclusion on the basis of any of the above
<p>Relational</p>	<p>This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Malicious gossip •Isolation & exclusion •Ignoring •Excluding from the group •Taking someone's friends away •"Bitching" •Spreading rumours •Breaking confidence •Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear •The "look"



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Use or terminology such as ‘nerd’ in a derogatory way
Sexual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching •Harassment
Special Educational Needs, Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name calling • Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs • Taking advantage of some pupils’ vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying • Taking advantage of some pupils’ vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues. • Mimicking a person’s disability • Setting others up for ridicule



APPENDIX 2: Template For Recording Alleged Bullying Behaviour

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name: _____ Class: _____

2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) 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)

Name Calling		Homophobic/Transgender	
Physical		Race/Nationality/Ethnic	
Intimidation		Relational	
Isolation/Exclusion		Sexual	
Cyber		SEN/Disability	
Damage to property		Other (specify)	
Extortion			

7. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

8. Details of actions taken

Has incident been resolved by the class teacher? Yes No

Signed: _____ (Class Teacher)

Date: _____

Date given to Principal _____

**APPENDIX 3:****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 _____ wishes to inform you that:

- 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].
- 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 _____