

# **Anti-Bullying Policy: St. Aidan's N.S., Clonroche.**

**Reviewed: 05-02-15**

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. Aidan's N.S., Clonroche** 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) 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 (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;

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

**(g) Supports for staff**

**(h) Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and**

**(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:

**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.

**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 (pushing, shoving, kicking, punching, hitting, poking, tripping, mess fights, head locks, pinching, spitting, hair pulling.</li> <li>• Damage to property/ personal property</li> <li>• Name calling / verbal comments</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”----facial expression</li> <li>• Invasion of personal space</li> <li>• A combination of any of the types listed.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Cyber</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•<b>Denigration:</b> Spreading rumors, 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 you then post 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> <li>•Abusive posts on any form of communication technology</li> </ul>
<p><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).</p>	
<p><b>Homophobic and Transgender</b></p>	<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>
<p><b>Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community</b></p>	<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>
<p><b>Relational</b></p>	<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. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:

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| <p><b>The Principal</b><br/> <b>Class teachers</b><br/> <b>Learning support teachers</b><br/> <b>Resource teachers</b></p> |
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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 :

<b>Education and prevention strategies</b>
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| <p><b>School-wide approach</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.</li> <li>• The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• An annual audit of professional development needs with a view to assessing staff requirements through internal staff knowledge/expertise and external sources</li> <li>• Professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teacher(s)</li> <li>• School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Involvement of the students in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Buddy system, mentoring, Lunchtime Pals and other student support activities that can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.</li> <li>• Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school-to be displayed publicly in classrooms and in common areas of the school.</li> </ul> |
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- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parent(s)/guardian(s) are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school (every year).
- The implementation of regular (e.g. per year/per term/per month/per week) whole school awareness measures e.g. a dedicated notice board in the school and classrooms on the promotion of friendship, and bullying prevention; annual Friendship Week and parent(s)/guardian(s) seminars; annual or term or monthly student surveys; regular school or year group assemblies by principal, deputy principal, etc.
- 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.
  - Anti-bully or Bubble Box.
  - Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
  - Anti-bullying Questionnaire and survey twice yearly.
  - 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 CSPE curricula and the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes, e.g. Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme, Friends for Life.
- School wide delivery of lessons on diversity, equality and interculturalism.
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE 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 e.g. teaching of a rhyme or slogan which would be short and easy to remember. Resource teachers will be available to reinforce this area.
- The school will implement the advice in "Sexual Orientation advice for schools" (RSE Primary, see booklet).

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

- Constant reinforcement of School Rules.
- Constant reinforcement of Code of Behaviour.
- Internet usage policy
- Important issues will be highlighted at assembly (twice weekly).

6. Strategies for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour:

**Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying in St. Aidan's N.S., Clonroche, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford**

**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.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;

**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;
- 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;
- Teachers will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.
- Where possible incidents will be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
- 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.
- **The relevant teacher will interview and question all individuals and groups involved. All information will be recorded.**
- **When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher 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.**
- **The teacher will endeavour to resolve any issues and restore the relationships of the parties involved.**
- **This procedure may have to be repeated up to three times, depending on the severity of the misdemeanour.**
- **If the situation still appears to be unresolved having followed the above procedure, the teacher will complete the "Template for recording bullying behaviour" as required.**
- **Parents/Guardians will at this point be contacted and called in to a meeting.**
- **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 will be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;**
- **It will 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.**

### **Follow up and recording**

- 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 or Deputy Principal
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should 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.
- 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) will 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 will advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

### **Recording of bullying behaviour**

The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

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

- All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher. Incidents will be recorded in a notebook which will travel up the school as the class moves on. In the case of a false allegation, the innocent child will be cleared in writing.
- While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher must keep a written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.
- The relevant teacher must 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.
- All records retained by the appropriate teacher must be kept in a securely locked drawer/filing cabinet in the classroom/office.

#### **Formal Stage 2**

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

- a) 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
- b) Where the school has decided as part of its anti-bullying policy that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

When the recording template is used, it will be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal. These will be stored securely in a locked filing cabinet.

#### **Established intervention strategies**

- Teacher interviews with all pupils
- Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process
- Working with parent(s)/guardian(s) to support school interventions
- No Blame Approach
- Circle Time
- Restorative interviews
- Restorative conferencing
- Implementing sociogram questionnaires
- Peer mediation where suitable training has been given

#### **7. Support for pupils who have been affected by bullying:**

- 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.
  - Pastoral care system
  - Buddy / Peer mentoring system
  - Referral to school's Code of Behaviour.
  - Group work such as circle time
  - Continued monitoring of particular situations.
  - Continued contact with parents.
  - Continued contact with Board of Management.
- If pupils require counselling of further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.
- Pupils will 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.

- Comprehensive supervision and monitoring measures will be implemented through all areas of school activities.
- Particular attention will be given to "hot spots" such as break-times, particular areas of the yard, cloakrooms and toilet areas, lines, movement between classrooms and learning support rooms, extra curricular activities such as tours/matches/swimming lessons. Pupils and parents will be made aware of these danger spots.
- Learning support/resource teachers will work in tandem with class teachers in the supervision and monitoring of students.
- The school has an up-to-date Internet Policy in place and pupils usage will be monitored.

### **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 24<sup>th</sup> February 2015.

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website, 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 is 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, 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.

**The annual review of this anti-bullying policy and its implementation was undertaken by the Board of Management on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2015.**

## **Indicators which may suggest a pupil is being bullied.**

### **Physical Indicators**

- Unexplained bruising, cuts etc.
- Loss of/damage to personal property.
- Hunger or thirst.
- Frequent minor illnesses, headaches, tummy.
- Bedwetting.
- Loss of appetite.
- Obsessive behaviour, physical appearance, weight.
- Stammering.
- Requests for extra money.

### **Emotional/Psychological Indicators**

- Outbursts of anger, temper, irritability at home.
- Bullying brother and sisters, parents.
- Well behaved child suddenly troublesome.

### **Signs of depression.**

- Changes in: mood, appetite, sleep pattern
- Tiredness, neglect of appearance.
- Expressions of sadness, worthlessness.
- Nightmares, crying at night.
- Restless, dangerous, wild, disruptive behaviour.
- Cynicism, black mood.
- Implied or overt threats of suicide.

### **School Related Indicators**

- Reluctance to go, wanting to be accompanied.
- Returning in bad form.
- Changing route.
- Avoiding certain days/lessons.
- Nervousness in class.
- Punctuality problems
- Poor concentration.
- Deterioration in school work.
- Expressions of hopelessness.
- Fewer phone calls, friends calling, invitations.
- Reluctance to take part in activities.
- Abusive phone calls, texts, emails.