

St. Nicholas' Primary School



Anti Bullying Policy

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, The Board of Management (BOM) of St. Nicholas' Primary School has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall Code of Behaviour. The 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 BOM 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 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 in a non threatening environment and promotes respectful relationships across the whole 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, investigating and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies) and
- Ongoing 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

“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,
- bullying based on a person's membership of the travelling community
- 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 will be dealt with as 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.

4. The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are the relevant teachers assigned to a specific class and or senior staff.

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) will be as follows:

Creation of a culture of "telling".

- 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" (telling protocol)
- Bystanders can be the key to resolving bullying, and if anyone witnesses bullying behaviour, they should always tell a teacher. This is not telling tales but a means of protecting victims.
- Conducting an *Anti Bullying Behaviour Disclosure /Awareness Audit* with children in 4th, 5th and 6th classes on two occasions every school year. The Principal, following an awareness of bullying behaviour lesson, will meet with each pupil on a one to one basis for 90 seconds and ask two questions:
 1. Are you aware of or have you witnessed any child in the school being bullied?
 2. Does any pupil subject you to bullying behaviour?

The pupils will be assured that any report that they make will be confidential and their identity as a reporter will never be disclosed if they so wish.

Please note that each meeting must last exactly 90 seconds, as a variation in time might possibly lead others to label some children 'tell tales' if out for a long time. If the Principal believes that more time is required for the meeting, a further discrete meeting will take place at a later stage. If a pupil has nothing to report, the 90 second conversation can divert to other school related matters...e.g. Are you happy in school /what is your favourite subject etc.

Every child's response to the questions above in the audit will be documented.

The school will devise a slogan or catchy title for this Anti Bullying Behaviour Audit eg. "90 seconds to help a Friend"

The audit outlined above can take place in any other class in the school if a teacher feels that there is a bullying issue among the children, and if it is proving difficult to resolve. The audit has the added benefit of reinforcing in the children's minds a culture of telling and reporting confidentially, and the audit will also hopefully help those children who may be responsible for bullying behaviour, to reflect on their actions and consider whether or not their behaviour has been noted by others and reported.

Raising the awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour by -

- Engaging in formal teaching within the class setting through SPHE, Circle Time and R.E programmes. (school to research materials on identity bullying)
- Early Intervention in resolving disputes between pupils
- Every effort must be made to resolve disagreements between pupils at the earliest possible stage. Unresolved disagreements can leave a lasting negative ill feeling between parties and in such an environment bullying behaviour can often be a natural consequence. Early resolutions facilitated by teachers or Principal allows the children the opportunity to move on and forget the incident which caused tension. This practice also serves as an example that conflict resolution is a reality and that equips the children with a valuable life skill for the years ahead.

Additional strategies which may be used include all or some of the following:

- Formal programmes of work are a vital element in raising children's self-esteem and equipping children to cope with bullying behaviour e.g. Walk Tall, RSE, Alive-O, Webwise, Stay Safe, Anti bullying guidelines, Positive reinforcement by teachers in classroom setting (Students of the week, Golden Time, spot prizes, stars, stickers etc.)
- Modeling of respectful behaviour and language by teachers and staff.

- Promotion of extra-curricular activities which encourage co-operation among pupils (to extend this beyond sport).
- Rewarding incidents of good and improved behaviour and showing acts of kindness at class level and whole-school through Student of the Week.
- Encouraging students to look out for each other and to be responsible for their own behaviour.
- All teachers are required to be vigilant on playground duty- record all incidences- monitor repeat offenders
- Immediate affirmation of children who report incidents of bullying which they have witnessed.
- Circle-time sessions, role-play, Socially Speaking programs and puppetry are methodologies which can be used to discuss and explore issues of bullying.
- Each class to have a set of class rules which compliment the school's Code of Behaviour.
- Ensure supervision at all times when pupils can access the internet.
- Sanctions for unauthorised use of the internet/electronic devices will be imposed as per the Code of Behaviour and AUP.

6.The school's procedure for investigation, follow up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying are as follows:

Incidents of Bullying will be dealt with on a staged basis.

Stage1

All reports of bullying must be dealt with initially by the class teacher.

- When a pupil tells a teacher s/he is being bullied, it is important to gather all of the facts from both sides (What, where, when, who, why?). This will involve an interview with the alleged bully using template in Appendices.
- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best to resolve the situation.
- The aim for the class teacher 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).
- Non teaching staff will be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them to the relevant teacher.
- The Teacher should take calm, unemotional, problem-solving approach.
- All sides are listened to separately and notes are taken.
- The notes are brief, factual and should be void of emotional or judgemental language.
- Instances are investigated outside the classroom to avoid public humiliations.
- All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regards to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way. (See Anti bullying Procedures for Primary and Post -Primary Schools 6.8.9 page 30-31) for further suggestions.
- Where possible, a witness is present.

- It is explained to the alleged bully how hurtful their behaviour is and attempts are made to encourage them to empathise with the alleged victim.
- The child/ children involved will be asked to sign a "Pupil Behaviour Promise Document".

Stage2

If this child breaks his/her "Pupil Behaviour Promise Document" and re-engages in bullying behaviour, the Principal or Assistant Principal along with the class teacher will interview the child/children again. It is explained to him/her that this is their second time offending and that they have not committed to their promise. Again attempts will be made to resolve the situation. Once more students will sign a further "Pupil Behaviour Promise Document". This time this has to be signed by their parents. They are now advised that if they break this promise again, they will have a meeting with the principal and their parents in the office and could face sanctions.

- Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigations and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible.
- Information spoken about should not become available, so that the victim would be further tormented. (Needs to know basis)

Stage3

If a child breaks their promise twice then the matter is referred to the Principal. The Principal meets with the child and the parent and the child. Procedures in line with may be suspended for up to 3 days. The Principal has the permission of the Board of Management to suspend for up to 3 days.

Recording of incidents: All incidents will be logged by class teacher and incidents which have not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days will be recorded by the class teacher on the recording template as in Appendix 3 (Anti bullying Procedures for Primary and Post -Primary Schools). This template will be completed in full and a copy given to the Principal. At least once every school term the Principal will provide a report to the BOM setting out the overall number of bullying cases reported by means of this template and confirmation that all cases are being dealt with in accordance with procedure.

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:

Victims

Victims are reassured from the outset that they are not to blame. Strategies for restoring self-esteem are explored between teacher and parents/guardians. Where deemed necessary, the child in consultation with parents may be referred for counselling.

Staged approach- class support, school support (as per Continuum -Behavioural, Emotional and Social difficulties- NEPS).

Addressing the needs of those responsible for bullying behaviour.

Where deemed necessary, the child in consultation with parents may be referred for counselling. They may need to learn other ways of meeting their needs without

violating the rights of others. Empathy awareness needs to be developed. Clinical referral and assessment may be necessary. A staged approach will involve the following

- class support,
- school support (as per Continuum-Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties- NEPS)

The school will constantly remind parents of the dangers of "cyber- bullying" as can happen with the use of social networking sites and mobile phones. We also direct their attention to the school's internet Acceptable Use Policy (AUP) and Policy on the use of Mobile Phones.

The school cannot be responsible for disagreements between pupils that happen outside the school grounds, but will make reasonable efforts to cooperate with parents in assisting them to resolve the issues.

8. Supervision and Monitoring of pupils:

The BOM 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 Harrassment.

The BOM confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practical 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 Travelling community.

10. Bullying behaviour among adults.

The problem of Bullying need not be confined to inappropriate peer interaction among children. Teacher/SNA/Staff behaviour may be unacceptable and in certain circumstances be described as bullying.

Parents/Guardians can also engage in bullying behaviour. Parents should behave appropriately in their interactions with other adults and all children in the school. Parents/Guardians/Adults who engage in sustained unwarranted actions/complaints against specific children, staff and other adults/parents/guardians in the school community may be deemed to be harassing or bullying these individuals.

11. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the policy:

The evaluation of the policy will happen on both an informal (through teacher observation) and formal basis (use of surveys and questionnaires).

Success Criteria:

- Positive feedback from teachers, parents and pupils
- Well-being and happiness of the whole school community in the light of incidents of bullying behaviour encountered and fewer problems in the yard.
- Increase in numbers of children reporting

12. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on the 20/1/2014.

13. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parent's Association. A copy of the policy will be made available to the Department and patron if requested.

14. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the BOM 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 Parent's association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and to the Department.

Chairperson: *Fr. Patrick Kearney*

Principal: *John Smyth*