Anti-Bullying Policy

Introductory Statement and Rationale

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. Patrick's Girls' 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.

Key Principles

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.

Definition of Bullying

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.

See Appendix A for examples of bullying behaviours. The list is not exhaustive. Appendix B gives advice for pupils and parents

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Relevant Teachers

4. **The relevant teachers** for investigating and dealing with bullying are the class teacher, Ms Crosse, Deputy Principal, Mrs. Kelly, Principal. The relevant LSRT teacher will also be involved with the specific class.

Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

Education and Prevention Strategies

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

School-wide approach

- A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.
- Highlighting the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- Worker of the Week, Special Achievement, Recognition at Assembly, Classroom Reward Systems. Pupils will be invited to engage in class performances at Christmas and during Seachtain na Gaeilge.
- 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.
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community. A booklet for staff, parents and pupils will be used in all classes
- Lunchtime Pals and Lunchtime Yard Games
- Anti-bullying week per term. Parent(s)/guardian(s) seminars; regular school assemblies
- 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 is 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.
  - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.

Implementation of curricula

- SPHE and CSPE curricula and the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme,
- School wide delivery of lessons on **Relational aggression** (Zippy's Friends, SALT Programme), **Cyber Bullying** (Be Safe-Be Web wise, Web wise Primary teachers' resources, Talks for Parents and Pupils in 5th and 6th Class organised by HSCL)
- Circle Time
- Social skills Groups
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes at primary level. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardai, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying

Links to other policies

Code of Behaviour, Child Protection , Daily Procedures, Attendance, Special Educational Needs**Investigation and Follow Up Procedures**

6. 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);

<u>**Reporting bullying behaviour**</u>

- 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;

<u>**Investigating and dealing with incidents:**</u>

- If bullying is alleged or suspected the relevant teacher will talk to the alleged victim, the alleged bully (or bullies) and any witnesses. If necessary, a written record will be kept.
- 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;
- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy). The school will give parent(s)/guardian(s) an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the pupils;
- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to her how she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and Code of Behaviour. Efforts should be made to try to get her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;
- It must 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, her parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school;

Recording of bullying behaviour

Recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner.

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.
- Copies of these report forms are available in the staffroom and these forms must be sent to the office for storage.

Formal Stage 2

The relevant teacher must use the specified recording template, Appendix 3 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.

The school should list behaviours that must be recorded and reported immediately to the principal. These should be in line with the school's code of behaviour.

When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal. The teacher stores the copy in a locked press in their classroom.

n **Working with Pupils affected by Bullying**

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

- 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.

- Student Council

- Lunch Time Pals, Yard Games

- Group work such as circle time

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

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.

School Plan File-Anti Bullying Policy 2018

- 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).
- 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.

Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils

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.

 Adopted by the Board of Management

10. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management in 2013/2014.

Availability of Document

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.

Evaluation and Review

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 the Parents' Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Appendix A

Examples of bullying behaviours

General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying	- Physical aggression - Damage to property - Name calling - Slagging - Offensive graffiti - Intimidation - Insulting or offensive gestures - The "look" - Invasion of personal space
Cyber	**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 **Exclusion**: Purposefully excluding someone from an online group - Silent telephone/mobile phone call - Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls - Abusive text messages - Abusive email - Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/ Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles - Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures - Abusive posts on any form of communication technology

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).	
Race, nationality, ethnic background and	Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background

membership of the Traveller community	• Exclusion on the basis of any of the above
Relational	• 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"
Special Educational Needs, Disability	• 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 B

Advice for Pupils

- Tell yourself that you do not deserve to be bullied, and that it is WRONG.

- Remember that your silence is the bully's greatest weapon.

- Be proud of who you are. It is good to be individual.
- Try not to show that you are upset. It is hard but a bully thrives on someone's fear.
- Stay with a group of friends/people. There is safety in numbers.
- Be assertive – follow the Stay Safe rules: Shout NO. Walk away confidently. Tell someone you trust
- Fighting back makes things worse– So don't fight back. REPORT to a teacher or parent(s)/guardians instead. If you need support find a friend and both of you speak to the teacher.
- Generally it is best to tell an adult you trust straight away. You will get immediate support.

The teachers will take you seriously and will deal with bullies in a way which will end the bullying and will not make things worse for you.

IF YOU KNOW SOMEONE IS BEING BULLIED:

·   TAKE ACTION – Watching and doing nothing looks as if you are on the side of the bully. It makes the victim feel more unhappy and on their own.

·   If you feel you cannot get involved, tell an adult IMMEDIATELY. Teachers have ways of dealing with the bully without getting you into trouble.

·   Do not be, or pretend to be, friends with a bully.

Advice for Parents

Look for unusual behaviour in your children. For example, they may suddenly not wish to attend school, feel ill regularly, or not complete work to their normal standard, ask for money or begin stealing money.

- Always take an active role in your child's education by enquiring how they are getting on.
- If you feel your child may be a victim of bullying behaviour, inform the school IMMEDIATELY. Your complaint will be taken seriously and appropriate action will follow.
- It is important to advise your child not to fight back. It can make matters worse.
- Tell your child there is nothing wrong with her. It is not her fault that she is being bullied.
- Make sure your child is fully aware of the School Policy concerning Bullying, and that they will not be afraid to ask for help.