

St. Patrick's Special School- Board of Management

Drumgoold, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford, Y21 Y9W0

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Anti-Bullying Policy

*Mr. Philip Kearney - Chairperson, Mr. Leigh Rogers - Secretary, Fr. T. Dalton – Patron Nominee, Ms. Kay Nixon – Community Nominee
Ms. Siobhan Doyle – Community Nominee, Mr. Tony Delaney – Parent Nominee, Ms. Cheryl Poole – Parent Nominee, Ms. Ciara Boegan – Staff Nominee*

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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 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 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
- 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.

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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 is/are as follows:

Principal Teacher, Deputy Principal, teacher/ SNA, Nurse.

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

St. Patricks School is a School for Children with Moderate, Severe/ Profound, Autism and Complex Needs diagnosis, fortunately bullying of any kind is a very rare occurrence, as such this policy should be read in conjunction with our Discipline (Behaviour Support) Policy.

Promotion of a positive school environment as per code of behaviour and school rules. SPHE curriculum. Modelling positive inclusive behaviour. Effective supervision, investigation of allegations and swift follow up.

* See also attached documents ; **Additional background and info on Bullying**

6. 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:

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Swift action by staff (as indicated in section 4) when an allegation is made, in accordance with due process and the principles of natural justice. St. Patrick's School Bullying behaviour recording sheet is used to record all pertinent information. Staff, pupils, parents, Guidance and HSE are involved as appropriate.

* See also attached documents ; **Additional background and info on Bullying**

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

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Counselling in school, advice to parents referral to HSE
in cooperation with parents, building self-esteem of victims.

* See also attached documents ; **Additional background and info on Bullying**

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 14/12/2023

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel and published on the school website. 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 and published on the school website. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: 
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _____
(Principal)

Date: 14/12/2023

Date: 14/12/2023

Date of next review: December 2024

Additional background and info on Bullying

BULLYING IS A SERIOUS, UNACCEPTABLE AND INCAPACITATING

EXPERIENCE for young people. It interrupts the normal adolescent process and is an experience that may linger and influence many later relationships, if both perpetrator and victim are not dealt with adequately.

There is a dangerous myth that bullying is just part of growing up, that it is just 'quarrelling amongst peers', that young people should 'sort it out amongst themselves', and that leaving them to do so will strengthen their ability to deal with problems later in life. It is this myth which leads fathers to be angry with their sons for being 'wimpish' and not 'standing their ground' or 'fighting back', or leads mothers to believe that their daughters are just involved in 'bitchiness'. To the contrary, bullying can involve physical assault, blackmail and extortion, systematic threat and intimidation, attack and theft, damage to possessions, assault on emotional and psychological well-being, and even the death of the victim who may be driven to suicide.

Bullying is also the problem that causes more agony in parents than any other school problem. Furthermore, being bullied rates amongst children's highest worries, and in one study of 4,000 children, 38% reported being bullied often enough or badly enough to be distressed. When the effects of bullying were traced into adulthood, in one Swedish study, statistics showed that bullying in various forms accounted for from 200-400 suicides a year.

There have been some excellent Irish studies of bullying, one of which found that over one-third of Irish Primary School children reported being bullied.

Over 43% reported occasionally bullying other children, and as many as 50% said that they had occasionally been bullied. Over one-fifth of children reported fear in coming to school because of bullying.

Internationally, the figures for serious ongoing bullying range from 5-10%, and Irish figures are high on this scale. Our tackling of the problem, therefore, has been less than excellent, and many parents, teachers or young people may have personally experienced the depression, misery and humiliation that bullying has caused to them or to those they know.

Definitions of Bullying

The most used definition of bullying is the Scandinavian one that 'bullying is long-standing violence, mental or physical, conducted by an individual or a group and directed against an individual who is not able to defend himself / herself in the actual situation'.

Who are the Bullies?

Bullies are not always easy to detect, and because of the shame, secrecy and collusion that often surround bullying, many remain unidentified. Bullies may not always come to a teacher's attention because their class behaviour may be fine. The bully who is also disruptive, academically unable, emotionally disturbed, or challenging to a teacher is obviously more likely to be identified or observed.

Who are the Victims?

Victims may be intellectually more able or less able than peers. Victims may be tall or small, fat or slim, have wonderful or poor appearance, be materially advantaged or deprived. The sad reality of bullying is that almost anyone can be bullied.

Having said that, studies have attempted to look at the characteristics of victims in an effort to understand why one person, rather than another, becomes a victim. Two kinds of victims, 'passive' and 'provocative', have been identified.

The 'passive' victims are those who are unable to defend themselves, whereas the 'provocative' victims are those who irritate in some way, for example by 'clumsy', or 'gauche', or having unusual hobbies.

Victims may also be different in some physical way, for example being overweight, having big ears, a big nose, a lack of personal hygiene, or, indeed, having anything different that may provide an opportunity for ridicule.


How can the school deal with bullying?

- ◆ Investigate the problem, and take reports of bullying seriously.
- ◆ Respond to every instance of bullying, however minor, and react immediately. 'Zero tolerance' is one of the best ways to tackle school bullying.
- ◆ Monitor the high-risk times for bullying, such as breaktime, the beginning and end of the school day.
- ◆ Monitor the physical locations in which bullying is more likely to occur, such as dark corridors, cloakrooms, changing-rooms and school yards
- ◆ Assign appropriate teachers to monitor bullying and to report on any observed incidents.
- ◆ Consciously comment on and reward kind, sensitive and non-bullying behaviour.
- ◆ Provide a presentation/lecture/video about bullying, which portrays the bully as a person with serious problems and inadequacies. This may help to dismantle any status the bully receives from his behaviour, and to deter potential bullies.
- ◆ Provide a support system for staff, and remember that many teachers are also bullied and are too ashamed to admit it.
- ◆ Where bullying is proved, reassure the victims that they are believed, that they will be helped and that the bullying will be stopped.
- ◆ In cases of serious bullying, suggest to the victim's parents that the victim should receive counselling.
- ◆ If the victim may have contributed to his victimization through problems of personal hygiene, age-inappropriate clothes, annoying or disgusting behaviour, extreme fearfulness, elicit the parents' help to address these issues in order to protect their child in the future.
- ◆ Explore factors that may have caused the bully's behaviour in the first place, for example, abuse, inability to cope, parental harshness, or being bullied by others.
- ◆ Confront the behaviour of bullies, not the bullies themselves. Help them to discover other ways of coping with their problems.
- ◆ Where a group of bullies is involved, approach each one individually without any opportunity for them to meet with each other and devise a coherent excuse. Make sure that those who deny their participation know that you intend to pursue it until everyone involved has been identified.
- ◆ Bullying behaviour should be reacted to with clear, determined and unambiguous disdain.
- ◆ Insist that bullies repair or replace any damaged goods, and that they apologise to the victim and plan restitution.

- ♦ Inform parents of both bully and victim of the problem, and seek their cooperation and attention.
- ♦ In situations where parents deny irrefutable bullying by their adolescent, insist on objective outside professional investigation and intervention.
- ♦ Where bullying is very severe and dangerous and the parents' reaction is violent, abusive and bullying, the Gardaí should be informed.

VERBAL PSYCHOLOGICAL OR PHYSICAL BULLYING WILL NOT BE TOLERATED

Bullying Charter

- We want  School to be free from bullying
- There should be no name calling
- There should be no physical abuse
- There should be no ganging up on people
- Everyone should feel respected
- When one of us does something wrong they should not be laughed at
- Problems should be shared
- We all share the responsibility to ensure that bullying is not tolerated.

CYBER-BULLYING

Cyber-bullying is deliberately hurting someone's feelings using information and communication technology such as;

- Emails
- Mobile phones
- Instant messaging
- Social networking sites
- Chat rooms
- Blogs
- Online gaming sites
- Online polling sites

PROTECT YOURSELF FROM CYBER-BULLING

- Hide your personal details.
- React appropriately to hurtful or nasty messages.
- Block the sender of hurtful or nasty messages.
- Set networking sites and profiles to "PRIVATE".
- Save nasty links, texts, messages and emails.
- Never open messages from someone you don't know.
- Always ask permission before revealing someone else's details.
- Only give details to trusted friends you know in real life.
- Do not give your password to anyone (with the exception of parents/guardians)
- Change your password often.
- Follow netiquette – communicate clearly, use emoticons and be polite.

ALWAYS REPORT CYBER-BULLYING IMMEDIATELY TO A TRUSTED ADULT

Mobile Phone /PERSONAL MEDIA PLAYERS Policy

The use of personal “mobile phones/ media players” is not allowed during or between classes and must be switched off and out of sight

The camera and recording mode must not be used at any time within the school.

The mobile phone, complete with the sim-card or personal media player will be confiscated and kept in the office:

Refusal to hand over a mobile phone or personal media player will result parents being contacted.

For all parents or guardians will be contacted. Similarly parents/guardians can contact the school in the case of an emergency.

The thrust of this policy is to support teaching and learning and also to enhance our anti-bullying policy.

Rules for Students

Respect for and co-operation with staff and students must be observed at all times. Lawful instructions must always be obeyed.

Please refer to Behaviour Support Plan for further details.

SANCTIONS

Sanctions should emphasize what is expected of students and should educate for responsibility. Sanctions must be fair and consistent. Please refer to Behaviour Support Plan for further details.