

St Oliver Plunkett's NS Anti-Bullying Policy/positive behaviour policy

Rationale.

- * This policy is required to assist the school in devising school-based measures to prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to increase awareness of bullying behaviour in the school community as a whole, e.g. school management, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents, as well as those from the local community who interface with the school.
- * Involving and encouraging all members of the school community in developing, formulating and reviewing this policy on bullying promotes, partnership, ownership and implementation of a 'living policy', one which is actively implemented/promoted in the whole school community.
- * The school climate and atmosphere are created by the actions of everyone in the school. The behaviour of the adults in a child's life, including parents and teachers, is a significant influence on how a child acts.

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 Oliver Plunkett's NS 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 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 (See Appendix 1) 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; encourages the work of the student council in this area
- 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 through SPHE, RSE, Walk Tall, Stay Safe and assemblies) that build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils and explicitly address the issues of cyber bullying and identity based bullying (through the yellow flag programme) 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 intervention strategies (SPHE, Walk Tall, Stay Safe, RSE, Garda Visiting programme and assemblies) 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 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:

Types of Bullying.

• **Physical aggression:**

It includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people up. It also may take the form of severe physical assault.

- **Damage to property:**

Personal property can be the focus of attention for the bully; this may result in damage to clothing, school books and other learning material or interference with a pupil's personal belongings. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.

- **Extortion:**

Demands for money may be made, often accompanied by threats (sometimes carried out), in the event of the victim not promptly "paying up". Victims' lunches may be taken. Victims may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to the bully. Sometimes this tactic is used for the sole purpose of incriminating the victim.

- **Intimidation:**

Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation; it is based on the use of very aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon. Particularly upsetting to victims can be the so-called 'look' - a facial expression which conveys aggression and/or dislike.

- **Cyber Bullying:** use of any technology

- Abusive Telephone Calls/Text Messages or On-line Bullying:**

The abusive anonymous telephone call is a form of verbal intimidation or bullying. Inappropriate texting and on-line messaging can also be forms of intimidation or bullying. Posting abusive or insulting messages on social media sites is also a form of bullying. The school's Acceptable Use Policy gives guidelines on proper use of the Internet and other electronic media.

- **Isolation:**

A certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or all, of the class group. This practice is usually initiated by the person engaged in the bullying behaviour. It may be accompanied by writing insulting remarks about the victim on blackboards or in public places, by passing around notes about or drawings of the victim or by whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard.

- **Name Calling:**

Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s), that hurts, insults or humiliates should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour; most name-calling of this type refers to physical appearance, including race.

Accent or distinctive voice characteristics may attract negative attention. Academic ability can also provoke name calling. This tends to operate at two extremes; first, there are those who are singled out for attention because they are perceived to be slow, or weak, academically. At the other extreme are those who are targeted because they are perceived as high achievers.

- **“Slagging”:**

This behaviour usually refers to good natured banter which goes on as part of the normal social interchange between people. However, when this ‘slagging’ extends to very personal remarks, aimed again and again at the one individual about appearance, clothing, personal hygiene or involves references of an uncomplimentary nature to members of one’s family, particularly if couched in sexual innuendo, then it assumes the form of bullying. It may take the form of suggestive remarks about a pupil’s sexual orientation.

- **Identity**

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.

- **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.

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.

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:

- The class teacher(s) initially
- The principal thereafter if necessary

5. The following education and prevention strategies, at the appropriate and relevant level for each class, will be used by the school:

- Prevention and awareness raising measures across all aspects of bullying and involves strategies to engage pupils in addressing problems when they arise. In particular, such strategies need to build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils
- Provide pupils with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth
- Prevention and awareness raising measures focusing on cyber-bullying by educating pupils on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while online, Garda Programme in fifth class

- Teachers can influence attitudes to bullying behaviour in a positive manner
- There are a number of curriculum components and programmes which are particularly relevant to the prevention of bullying and the promotion of respect for diversity and inclusiveness. The SPHE curriculum makes specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the inter-related areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships. The Stay Safe & RSE programmes at primary level are personal safety skills programmes which seek to enhance children's self-protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying. Various other social, health and media education programmes can further help to address the problem of bullying behaviour.
- The work could be extended into many other areas such as Art, Drama, Religion Education and Physical Education.
- Cooperation and group enterprise can be promoted through team sports, schools 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, Rugby, Tennis, Cricket and Athletics are offered to classes from outside agencies and teachers are involved in the coaching of basketball, athletics, soccer, cricket and GAA.
- Other activities can provide excellent opportunities to promote inclusiveness and diversity such as chess, art and craft, modern and Irish dance and Spanish. These clubs are offered to children.
- Friendship week, Yellow Flag Programme

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.

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 apportion blame) with this in mind the school's procedures are as follows:

- 1) 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
- 2) 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
- 3) Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher
- 4) Parents 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
- 5) It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset
- 6) Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents

- 7) Initial investigations of bullying will be done in class where possible but some incidents might be best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved
- 8) All interviews should 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
- 9) When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher(s) should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner
- 10) If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements
- 11) 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
- 12) Where the relevant teacher(s) has/have determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied
It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s)
- 13) In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher(s) that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken.
The school should give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and supports for their pupils.
- 14) 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.
- 15) 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.
- 16) 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.
- 17) Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaint procedures.
- 18) In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaint procedure and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

7. Disciplinary procedures

- a) St Oliver Plunkett's NS will utilise a restorative practice approach in its initial stage of resolving the situation as outlined in section 6 of this policy. If a perpetrator has been clearly identified after monitoring and documenting behaviour then the following procedure will take place. All staff will be made aware of the importance of this practice.

- (b) A verbal warning will be given to the perpetrator to stop the offending behaviour. This will be done in the presence of the perpetrator's parent(s), the Principal and another teacher. The perpetrator will also be requested to apologise to the victim in the presence of the Principal, and another teacher and to give an assurance that the offending behaviour will stop.
- (c) With any reported incident of bullying behaviour within the school, the parent/guardian(s) will be kept apprised of developments and stages of the investigation as the situation dictates and as early as reasonably possible.
- (d) If bullying reoccurs, a formal contract will be drawn up and entered into by both parties, and the parent/guardian(s) of both parties will be informed. The contract will be monitored regularly by the Principal with the assistance of the class teacher and another member of staff to see that the situation is resolved.
- (e) If after the above, the bullying behaviour reoccurs, a formal meeting of the perpetrator, her parent/guardian(s), the Principal and the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be held and a formal suspension in line with the school's Code of Behaviour may/will occur. The Chairperson will have the authority to enact an immediate suspension or in certain circumstances may issue a final Chairperson's warning to the perpetrator e.g. where an extended time has elapsed since the last incident.

8. Adult bullying of a child

All complaints against a teacher are handled under the agreed INTO/CPSMA Complaints Procedure. A hard copy may be obtained from the school Office at any time.

9. Parent bullying of a teacher

School staff are entitled to work in a safe, professional environment free from verbal ,written, cyber or physical bullying. Parents are reminded to make a formal appointment if they wish to discuss an issue.

10.Recording:

Noting and reporting of bullying behaviour is to be documented using the template for *recording bullying behaviour* (appendix 3). All records must be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. The school's procedures for noting and reporting will adhere to the following:

- (i) While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher(s), the relevant teacher(s) will use his/her/their professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same
- (ii) If it is established by the relevant teacher(s) that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher(s) 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
- (iii) The relevant teacher(s) must use the recording template at Appendix 3 to record the bullying behaviour .

11. Supervision and Monitoring and Awareness of Bullying: 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.

In order to ensure supervision, monitoring and awareness:

- a) All families will have access to the policy.
- b) Parents are encouraged to notify the school immediately if they become aware of bullying.
- c) The monthly newsletter contains points of information on bullying.
- d) The names of the children who are considered “at risk” from bullying are entered in the yard book.
- e) staff are reminded on a regular basis to be watchful for occurrence of bullying, to check the yard book and to investigate all reports of incidents with pupils.
- f) older children are encouraged to help and listen to younger children.
- g) A rotating prefect system which gives responsibility to 5th and 6th class pupils to help in the reporting of incidences is in use.

12. RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In the school’s daily and routine life, the ways in which people interact with each other significantly affect each person’s sense of self-worth, belonging and well-being.

The fostering of high-quality interpersonal relationships among teachers, students, parents and ancillary staff is a responsibility shared by everyone.

All members of the school community have a role to play in the prevention of bullying.

. Responsibilities of School Staff

- To acknowledge that bullying is a shared responsibility within the school
- To draw upon Restorative Justice practices, taking into account the age of the students
- 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 using Restorative Justice practices
- 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.

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 feel empathy for targeted members of the school community and, as a result, take safe and sensible action as a bystander.

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
- To speak to the class teacher if their child is being bullied or they suspect that this is happening
- To instruct their children to tell if they are bullied or if they have seen other students 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
- To never directly approach a student or the parent of a student at the school to intervene in behavioural issues.

10. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on the 14/6/2021.

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.

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 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.

Sheila Macken (Chairperson of Board of Management)

Mairéad Murphy

Date : 14/6/2021

Reviewed and check list completed 19.06.2023

Appendix 3 Template for recording 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	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Pupil	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))*

Playground	<input type="checkbox"/>
Classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corridor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Toilets	<input type="checkbox"/>
School Bus	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern

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6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) *

Physical Aggression	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cyber-bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>
Damage to Property	<input type="checkbox"/>	Intimidation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Isolation/Exclusion	<input type="checkbox"/>	Malicious Gossip	<input type="checkbox"/>
Name Calling	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

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9. Details of actions taken

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Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

* **Note:** The categories listed in the tables 3, 4 & 6 are suggested and schools may add to or amend these to suit their own circumstances.