

St. Francis Senior National School

Anti-Bullying Policy

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. Francis Senior National School has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's 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 which:**
 - is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusiveness;
 - 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;**

- recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies);
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

Definition

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.

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 appropriate, in accordance with our 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.

The following are some of the types of bullying behaviour that can occur amongst pupils:

- **Physical aggression:** This behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While pupils often engage in 'mess fights', they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.
- **Intimidation:** Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation: it may be based on the use of very aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon. Particularly upsetting can be a facial expression which conveys aggression and/or dislike.
- **Isolation/exclusion and other relational bullying:** This occurs where a certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or the entire class group. This practice is usually initiated by the person engaged in

bullying behaviour and can be difficult to detect. It may be accompanied by writing insulting remarks about the pupil in public places, by passing around notes about, or drawings of the pupil or by whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard. Relational bullying occurs when a person's attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined.

- **Cyber-bullying:** This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, e-mail, instant messaging (IM), apps, gaming sites, chat-rooms and other online technologies. Being the target of inappropriate or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying. As cyber-bullying uses technology to perpetrate bullying behaviour and does not require face to face contact, cyber-bullying can occur at any time (day or night). Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyber-bullying.
- **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. Often name-calling of this type refers to physical appearance, e.g., size or clothes worn. Accent or distinctive voice characteristics may attract negative attention. Academic ability can also provoke name calling. This tends to operate at two extremes. There are those who are singled out for attention because they are perceived to be weak academically. At the other extreme there are those who, because they are perceived as high achievers, are also targeted.
- **Damage to property:** Personal property can be the focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, school books and other learning material or 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 targeted pupil not delivering on the demand). A pupil may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to another who is engaged in bullying behaviour.

Indicators of Bullying Behaviours

The following signs and symptoms **may** suggest that a pupil is being bullied:

- Anxiety about travelling to and from school e.g. requesting parents to drive or collect him, changing travel routes, avoiding regular times for travelling to and from school;
- Unwillingness to go to school, refusal to attend, truancy;
- Deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school;
- Pattern of physical illnesses e.g. headaches, stomach aches;
- Unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour which may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or more especially after longer school holidays;
- Visible signs of anxiety or distress e.g. stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, bedwetting;
- Spontaneous out-of-character comments about either pupils or teachers;
- Possessions missing or damaged;
- Increased requests for money or stealing money;
- Unexplained bruising or cuts or damaged clothing; and
- Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling him.

There may be other signs depending on the individual and his circumstances. The above signs do not necessarily mean that a pupil is being bullied but if repeated or occurring in combination, these signs do warrant investigation in order to establish what is affecting the pupil.

Roles and Responsibilities

All members of staff have a responsibility in the successful implementation of this policy. Class teachers have the primary responsibility for the investigation of and dealing with reports of bullying. If a pupil reports bullying to non class teaching staff member this information must be made known to the class teacher as soon as possible.

The Principal teacher may deal with the report of bullying if the class teacher, after fully investigating and attempting to deal with the issues, feels it appropriate to fill and submit an official bullying report form to the Principal where a successful outcome has not yet been reached.

In addition, the class teacher can, in accordance with our school's code of behaviour, automatically refer the report of bullying to the Principal or Deputy Principal if he/she deems that circumstances warrant such action and that the aforementioned procedure cannot be applied.

Educational and Preventative Strategies

We, at St. Francis S.N.S. aim to use effective, age appropriate practices and awareness raising measures across all aspects of bullying and implement strategies to engage pupils in addressing problems when they arise. It is envisaged that such strategies will build empathy, respect and resilience among our pupils.

As self-esteem is a major factor in determining behaviour, our school, through both our curricular and extra-curricular programmes, will provide pupils with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth.

Our school's approach to tackling and preventing bullying will take particular account of the needs of our pupils with disabilities or special educational needs.

Teachers can influence attitudes to bullying behaviour in a positive manner through a range of curricular initiatives. The **SPHE/RSE** curriculum makes specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the inter-related areas of belonging, integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships. The **Stay Safe** programme is a personal safety skills programme which seeks to enhance children's self-protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying. This programme, which includes specific lessons on anti-bullying, is formally taught in 3rd and 5th Classes in September.

At St. Francis Senior NS we recognise the opportunities within the teaching of all curricular subjects to foster an attitude of respect for all: to promote the value of diversity; to address prejudice and stereotyping and to highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.

In our school, the **Friends for life** programme is currently being piloted in 6th class. This programme assists children, families and schools in developing resilience and positive life-coping skills in order to manage difficult situations which may come their way. It is envisaged that we as a school will be able to extend the **Friends for life** programme to other classes in the near future.

St. Francis Senior NS, recognises and acknowledges the prevalence of cyber bullying in society. Throughout curriculum we teach the children the importance of internet safety and highlight the issue of cyber bullying. In accordance with our Acceptable Usage Policy we have put in place preventative measures to ensure that pupils have no access to any IT device or websites that could allow for cyber bullying to take place at school. The use of mobile phones or any mutli media devices are strictly prohibited. All our laptops are filtered to ensure that pupils have no access to social networking sites or emails. If an incident of cyber bullying, which takes place out of school hours, is reported to us we will inform the parents of the parties involved immediately. Staff cannot investigate reports of cyber bullying if they did not take place on the school premises and during the school day. The Board of Management cannot accept responsibility for cyber bullying which takes place outside of school hours.

Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

Our school's procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:

- 1) The primary 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);
- 2) In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
- 3) All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the class teacher. 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;
- 4) Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers, cleaners must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the class teacher;
- 5) 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;
- 6) It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset;
- 7) Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents;
- 8) Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
- 9) 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.
- 10) When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the class teacher 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.
- 11) 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 account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements;

- 12) Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face them from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher;
- 13) It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s);
- 14) In cases where it has been determined by the class teacher 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 (by reference to the school policy). 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 the supports for their pupils;
- 15) Where the class teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him how he is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;
- 16) 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 parents and the school;
- 17) Follow-up meetings with the class 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. This can have a therapeutic effect;
- 18) In cases where the class teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded by the class teacher in the recording template.
- 19) In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the class 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; and
 - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal;
 - 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 complaints procedures;
 - In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

All records must be maintained in accordance with class data protection legislation.

Programmes of Student Support

Following reports and investigations of bullying class teachers can seek feedback from pupils and parents in order to monitor and observe. The school has access to the following external agencies which may support those experiencing difficulties.

- NEPS
- ISPC
- SCP
- Rainbows
- An Garda Síochána

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.

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.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 2-5-2017

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.

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.

Signed: Rosam Smith
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: Michael Kennedy
(Principal)

Date: 2-5-2017

Date: 2-5-2017

Date of next review:

Appendix 1: 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 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		Cyber-bullying	
Damage to Property		Intimidation	
Isolation/Exclusion		Malicious Gossip	
Name Calling		Other (specify)	

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

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Member of Traveller community	Other (specify)

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

9. Details of actions taken

Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

Appendix 2:

Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the anti-bullying policy

The Board of Management of St Francis Senior School,

To: _____ wishes to inform you that:

o The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of 2-5-17 [date]

o This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in Appendix 4 of the Department's *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Signed *Ronnie Smith* Date 2-5-2017
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed *Michael Kennedy* Date 2-5-2017
Principal

Appendix 3:

Checklist for annual review of anti-bullying policy and its implementation

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation. The following checklist must be used for this purpose. The checklist is an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. In order to complete the checklist, an examination and review involving both quantitative and qualitative analysis, as appropriate across the various elements of the implementation of the school's anti-bullying policy will be required

	Yes/No
Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools</i> ?	✓
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	.
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	✓
Is the Board satisfied that school staff are sufficiently familiar with the policy and procedures to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy and procedures in their day to day work?	✓
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	✓
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	✓
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	✓
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	✓
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	✓
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	✓

Has the Board discussed how well the school is handling all reports of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and not therefore included in the Principal's periodic report to the Board?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Has the data available from cases reported to the Principal (by the bullying recording template) been analysed to identify any issues, trends or patterns in bullying behaviour?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	YES
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	NO
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A

Signed *Ronan Smith*
 Chairperson, Board of Management

Date 2-5-17

Signed *Michael Kennedy*
 Principal

Date 2-5-17