

## 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 of St. Brendan's 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. This policy was devised in April 2014 with the consultation of the teachers, parents and B.O.M.
  
2. The Board of Management recognizes 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;
- promotes respectful relationships across the school community

### **Effective leadership**

The principal and other leaders in the school, including all teachers, will strive to engender an ethos under which bullying is unacceptable. Practical steps are taken to challenge and respond to bullying. The principal will involve both staff and pupils in developing and implementing a vision of the school where diversity is accepted and celebrated.

### **A school-wide approach**

A positive school-wide attitude and involvement is implemented in countering bullying behaviour in schools. In addition to the role of management and staff, parents and pupils have a role and responsibility in helping the school to prevent and address school-based bullying behaviour and to deal with any negative impact within school of bullying behaviour that occurs elsewhere. Parents should also recognise that a school that openly discusses bullying is acting positively and that they need to work with their school to ensure there is a coherent, school-wide approach to tackling the issue.

### **A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact**

St Brendan's will publish the anti bullying policy on the school website to ensure that all relevant members of the school community have a shared understanding of what constitutes bullying behaviour.

**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**

The BOM will ensure there is adequate playground supervision and staff will maintain vigilance in monitoring for bullying incidents.

**Supports for staff:** The BoM will ensure that all staff are conversant with this policy. It will also ensure that training and awareness in respect of bullying issues will be provided to the staff.

**Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour** including the use of established intervention strategies.

**On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy**

This policy will be reviewed every year by staff and BoM and it will be discussed at staff meetings to monitor effectiveness of the 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:

- a. deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
- b. cyber-bullying and
- c. 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.

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:  
Class Teacher/Principal/Deputy Principal
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
  - a. Staff, pupils, parents and Board of Management (BoM) will be made aware of issues surrounding all forms of bullying through the use of appropriate awareness-raising exercises.
  - b. B.O.M. will ensure that there is adequate playground supervision.
  - c. Staff members share a collegiate responsibility, under the direction of the Principal, to act in preventing bullying/aggressive behaviour by any member of the school community.
  - d. Staff offer clear guidance about what steps to take if being bullied or witness bullying and ensure children understand how school deals with bullying.

- e. School staff will encourage students to help them identify bullying "hotspots" and "hot times" for bullying in the school.
  - f. Staff will consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school- this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of children with a disability.
  - g. Staff will explicitly teach what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like through circle time/ role play/ drama/ SPHE programmes including Stay Safe and Walk Tall.
  - h. Display key respect messages around school and discuss in class and at assembly. Children will be involved in making posters promoting positive anti-bullying messages through their art lessons such as "Give racism the red card" and "Say no to bullies" and other similar slogans.
  - i. Emphasis will be put on catching children being good and giving positive feedback when respectful behaviour and language is observed.
  - j. The school will actively promote the right of all to be safe and secure in school through class and assembly talks.
  - k. Promote a telling culture where emphasis is put on telling an adult if bullying is occurring to you or others and promoting this as a positive thing to do rather than "telling" or "ratting".
  - l. The school will facilitate a workshop on cyber bullying for 5th and 6th classes when possible through the local community Gardaí.
  - m. Staff CPD (Continuous Professional Development) and planning sessions will focus on developments in anti- bullying strategies and policy development.
  - n. Pupils and parents will be urged to report all incidents of bullying to the school.
  - o. All reports of bullying will be investigated, recorded, stored in the Principal's office and monitored regularly.
  - p. The Gardaí will be contacted in cases of actual or suspected cyber bullying.
  - q. This policy will be reviewed annually. B.O.M., pupils, parents and staff will be involved in reviewing and revising this policy and any related school procedure.
6. St Brendan'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 for the relevant 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);
  - 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;
  - All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant 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;
  - Non-teaching staff such as secretary, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretaker, cleaners are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;
  - 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;

- It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset;
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents;
- Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
- 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;
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant 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;
- 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;
- 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;
- It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s);
- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant 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;
- Where the relevant 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;
- 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;
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant 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;
- In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after h/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded by the relevant teacher in the recording template attached as an appendix to this policy.
- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed, the relevant 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.
7. St Brendan's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:
- a. Support from the class teacher by giving the child opportunity to discuss privately the effect of the bullying if the child is upset or feeling vulnerable
  - b. Class teacher/Principal monitors the children involved and liaises with parents re progress in handling the effects of the bullying Support through discussion with SET and NEPS psychologist if deemed helpful
  - c. Referral to Counseling services /CAMHS if deemed necessary in severe cases
  - d. School may facilitate opportunities for victims and bullies to identify solutions to specific bullying incidents that they are directly involved in. They may use restorative methods, including mediation, to support victims and perpetrators of bullying to understand one another and resolve their differences.
  - e. Provide opportunities to explore diversity and different aspects of identity and the challenges that these groups may face through SPHE lessons.

## 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, reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2023
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 (or be

otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) 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: 

Chairperson, BOM

Signed: 

Principal

Date: 23/10/2023

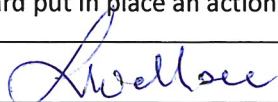
The following are some practical tips for immediate actions that can be taken to help build a positive school culture and climate and to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour.

- Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.
- Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.
- Catch them being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN.
- Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines when appropriate
- Explicitly teach pupils about the safe use of social media.
- Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use.
- Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.
- Actively involve parents and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media.
- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.
- Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas. All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- Ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.
- School staff can get pupils to help them to identify bullying "hot spots" and "hot times" for bullying in the school.
  - ◆ Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas, changing rooms, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision.
  - ◆ Hot times again tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when pupils are in the playground/school yard or moving classrooms.

## Checklist for annual review of the 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> ?	Yes
Has the Board published the policy on the school website?	Yes
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	Yes
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?	Yes
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	Yes
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	Yes
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	Yes
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	Yes
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	Yes
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	Yes
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?	Yes
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	No
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	No
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	No
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?	Yes
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	Yes
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	Yes

Signed   
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date 14-10-2023

Signed   
Principal

Date 24/10/2023