

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 Ss. Peter & Paul'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.

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.

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.

Examples of bullying include.

- Physical aggression e.g. hitting, kicking, poking, shoving, pushing, tripping, and punching.
- Intimidation: aggressive body language.
- Persistent name-calling.

- **deliberate** exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
- cyber-bullying e.g. using phone/text/social network to target a person with hurtful messages/negative comment.
- 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.
- Special needs. e.g. Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs. Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues.

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.

The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying are:

All reports of bullying behaviour, no matter how trivial, will be dealt with in the first instance by the class teacher.

The principal will become involved at the request of the class teacher when necessary or in serious incidences.

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

Education and prevention strategies

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.
- The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities.
- 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.

- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.
- Anti-Bullying Policy for the school-to be included in student journals and displayed publicly in classrooms and in common areas of the school.
- The school’s anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parent(s)/guardian(s) are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school (every year).
- Encourage a culture of reporting, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. Children are regularly reminded that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
- Developing a culture of 3 R’s – Recognise, Reject, Report.
- Reform not blame approach.
- Parents who suspect that their child is being bullied should inform the school at the earliest opportunity by an appointment with the class teacher/HSCL teacher.
- Supports within the school include
 - Anti Bullying Posters
 - Implementation of Anti Bullying programme.
 - Roots of Empathy

Implementation of curricula

- The full implementation of the SPHE curriculum and the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.
- Implementation of anti-bullying campaign – see appendix A
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes, e.g., Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme.
- School wide delivery of lessons on **Cyber Bullying** – See appendix c
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardai, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying
- The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.

Links to other policies

- i. Code of Behaviour,
ii. Child Protection policy,
iii. Acceptable Use policy,
iv. Attendance.
v. Supervision Policy

Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

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 to apportion blame).

Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s)) understand this approach from the outset.

Reporting bullying behaviour

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher (we recommend the class teacher/HSCL) in the school.
- All 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), care-takers, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;

Investigating and dealing with incidents: Style of approach

We are adopting the “Anti Bullying Campaign” procedures (see appendix A).

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the (relevant)teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
- 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;
- Due regard will be given to the rights and responsibilities of all pupils concerned.
- Pupils who are not directly involved may also provide useful information.
- Where possible incidents should be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
- If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved will be met as a group.
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 parent(s)/guardian(s) of the parties involved will be contacted at an early stage(Stage 2 – Pupil Promise) to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken .
- Where a pupil has engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him that 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 will also be made clear to those involved (pupils and parents/guardian(s)) that **in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, it is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school;**

Follow up and recording

- 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;
-Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardian(s) or the school Principal or Deputy Principal

- 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.
- Where a parent(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
- In the event that a parent(s)/guardian(s) has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Recording of bullying behaviour

It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner.

The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

Step 1 - Anti-Bullying Campaign (informal)

- All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them (appendix A – Incident Report Form).
- The Incident Report Form is given to the relevant teacher, who must keep it and record the actions taken on the reverse-side of sheet.

Step 2 - Determination that bullying has occurred(Formal)

- If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, he/she will keep a written record of the discussion with those involved. This record is to assist the teacher to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- The perpetrator will be required to sign and keep a promise that they will not reoffend. (Appendix A – Pupil Promise). Parents and Principal will not be informed at this stage.
- All records will be stored by the class teacher with the class discipline file.
- At the end of the year they will be placed in a file in the secretary's office.

Step 3

- If the pupil re-offends the principal and the parents will be informed.
- Both the perpetrator and the parents will be required to sign a new promise guaranteeing that there will be no further offences. (Appendix A – Parent/Pupil Promise).
- It will be brought to their attention that any further incidents will result in disciplinary action.

Step 4.

- In the case of further bullying behaviour occurring the school's Code of Discipline will apply.
- It will also be made clear to those involved (pupils and parents/guardian(s)) that **in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, it is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school.**

D.E.S. Requirement.

In the following circumstance the relevant teacher must use the recording template at **Appendix B** to record the bullying behaviour:

- 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

When the recording template(Appendix B) is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal. Records will be stored in a secure file in the principal's office.

The intervention strategies to be used in the school are as follows (see appendix A):

- Teacher interviews with all pupils
- Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process
- Working with parent(s)/guardian(s) to support school interventions
- No Blame Approach
- Circle Time
- Restorative interviews
- Restorative conferencing

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

- 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.
 - Pastoral care system
 - Group work such as circle time
- If pupils require counselling or 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.
- Pupils are regularly reminded that there **are no innocent bystanders** and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher

Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

It is planned to draw up a supervision policy in 2014/15 school year.

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 _____ [date].

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 (or where none exists, be otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). 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: _____

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____

