

ST TIERNAN'S COMMUNITY SCHOOL

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 TIERNANS COMMUNITY 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.

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

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

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Reports of bullying will be investigated by teachers, the Pastoral Care Team, Year Head, Guidance Counselor, Chaplain, Deputy Principal and Principal as appropriate.

A student may report a bullying incident to any teacher or adult in the School Community.

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:

1. There is the potential within the teaching of all subjects and within extra curricular activities to cultivate an attitude of respect in line with the ethos of the school.
2. Incoming First Years partake in an Orientation Programme where they are briefed on the school's Anti Bullying culture/ ethos.
3. All year groups are made aware of the school's Anti Bullying initiatives at Wednesday's assembly.
4. All Stakeholders in the school are made aware of the school's initiatives by means of effective communication and circulation of the policy.
5. Supervision and Monitoring of all areas of school activity takes place at all times.
6. Sixth Years engage in a mentoring programme with incoming First Years.
7. Prefects and Senior students are made aware of their responsibility for recognizing and reporting bullying behaviour.
8. A Bullying Awareness week takes place every year including Talks and Poster Campaigns which are scheduled on our calendar
9. The S.P.H.E/ C.S.P.E and Religion classes play a significant role in informing students about Bullying
10. Teaching and Non Teaching staff receive inservice on Internet Safety.(This Anti Bullying policy will operate in conjunction with the Internet Acceptable use Policy.)
11. LGBT issues will be dealt within the SPHE programme. This will include a poster campaign.
12. The school takes particular care of "at risk" pupils (Pupils with disabilities or with SEN) and uses its monitoring system to provide early intervention when/if necessary and responds to the needs, fears or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner.

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:

Investigation and follow up:

An incident can be reported to a Class Teacher, Tutor, Year Head, Pastoral Care Staff, Chaplain or School Principal/Deputy Principal or S.N.A.

The teacher/ relevant adult will exercise his/her professional judgment to determine whether bullying has occurred

All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying are investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.

Teachers take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.

Incidents are investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;

If a group is involved, each member is interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved are met as a group. At the group meeting, each member is asked for his/her account of the situation.

If appropriate those involved will be asked to write down their account of the incident(s);

Where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents / guardians of the parties involved are contacted to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken.

Where a student is deemed to have engaged in bullying behaviour it is made clear to him/her that he/ she is in breach of the School's Anti Bullying Policy and Code of Behaviour

Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved are 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.

In cases where the relevant 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 relevant teacher in the recording template Appendix 3.

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 parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal;
- Where a parent /guardian is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents /guardians must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures;
- In the event that a parent / guardian 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.

Recording bullying behaviour

The Board of Management has clear procedures for the formal noting and reporting of bullying behaviour and these are documented in the school's anti-bullying policy. All records are maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour adhere to the following:

- (i) While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying are investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher uses his/her 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 that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher keeps appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- (iii) The relevant teacher must use the recording template at **Appendix 3** to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:
 - a) 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
 - b) where the school has decided as part of its anti-bullying policy that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

In each of the circumstances at (a) and (b) above, the recording template at **Appendix 3** must be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable. It should also be noted that the timeline for recording bullying behaviour in the recording template at **Appendix 3** does not in any way preclude the relevant teacher from consulting the Principal or Deputy Principal at an earlier stage in relation to a case.

Bullying as part of a continuum of behaviour

St Tiernan's Community School recognises that bullying behaviour can be part of a continuum of behaviour rather than a stand-alone issue and in some cases behaviour may escalate beyond that which can be described as bullying to serious physical or sexual assault or harassment. To ensure that any such cases are dealt with appropriately, the school's anti-bullying policy will provide for appropriate linkages with the overall code of behaviour and will provide for referral to be made to relevant external agencies and authorities where appropriate. Where the school has serious concerns in relation to managing the behaviour of a pupil, the advice of the National Education Psychological Service (NEPS) will be sought.

Referral of serious cases to the HSE

In relation to bullying in schools, *Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011* (Children First) and the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* provide that in situations where “the incident is serious and where the behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive, the school will consult the HSE Children and Family Social Services with a view to drawing up an appropriate response, such as a management plan”

Serious instances of bullying behaviour will, in accordance with the Children First and *the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*, be referred to the HSE Children and Family Services and/or Gardaí as appropriate.

The *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* also provide that where school personnel have concerns about a child but are not sure whether to report the matter to the HSE, the Designated Liaison Person will seek advice from the HSE Children and Family Social Services.

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

All students involved in a bullying incident are advised of the availability of the Guidance Counselor by a member of the Care Team.

The target of the bullying may receive counseling and/or opportunities to participate in activities to raise self esteem and develop social skills.

The student involved in bullying behaviour may also receive counseling and/or assistance on an on-going basis to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the needs of others.

Witnesses of bullying are encouraged to talk to their teachers.

4. 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.

5. 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.

6. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____ [date].
7. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.
8. 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 ratified: November 2014

Date of next review: _____