

Saint Fiachra's Senior National School

Anti-bullying Policy (revised 2014)

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB (TUSLA), the Board of Management of St.Fiachra's Senior 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.

4. The relevant teacher for investigating and dealing with bullying is the class teacher of the pupil who first reports the incident. Where pupils from multiple classes may be involved, the relevant teacher for investigating the incident will be appointed by the Principal. The Principal will take primary responsibility for guiding the process to a resolution. Where the incident or allegation is considered to be of a serious nature, the following investigative procedures will be followed:

- The child will be interviewed by the class teacher in the first instance. The teacher may implement the sanctions listed below.
- Where the offence is considered to be of a sufficiently serious nature, the pupil(s) will be interviewed by the Principal or Deputy Principal. The pupils' parents will be informed and will be invited to attend the interview.
- Where more than one pupil is involved, the parents of all children will be invited to attend the office to witness and to assist in the interview process.
- Where a dispute has arisen between parties, the parents will be invited to assist in the reconciliation process where appropriate.

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

- St. Fiachra's Anti-Bullying Campaign Handbook 1 as follows:

THIRD CLASS LESSONS 1 ~ 6

FOURTH CLASS LESSONS 7 ~ 12

FIFTH CLASS LESSONS 13 ~ 18

SIXTH CLASS LESSONS 19 ~ 24

- Other Resources include the Stay Safe Programme for all classes.
- The Principal will conduct a series of lessons with each of the senior classes as deemed appropriate. *The lessons may be used again in third and fourth class if necessary.*

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 pupils will always be encouraged to report incidents that they find upsetting. St. Fiachra's will be a 'Telling School'.

- The ‘relevant teacher’ who may be the class teacher or designated teacher or Principal will investigate the allegations thoroughly.
- The ‘Seven Quick Steps for Dealing with Possible Bullying Situations’ will be carried out. This includes the use of the ‘Incident Report Form’ and the ‘Action Taken Form’. Follow up work will include the use of the ‘Alleged Bullying Interview’ form and the ‘Bullying Behaviour Checklist’.
- Pupils who are found to be involved in bullying will be asked to sign the ‘Pupil Behaviour Promise’ which will be countersigned by the child’s parents and teacher.

Special Note:

In cases where the Principal is satisfied that a serious case of bullying has taken place, the children involved will be interviewed. The child’s parents will be invited to attend the interview.

7. The school’s programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools DES September 2013*) :

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 by the Board of Management on April 2014.

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.

Signed: _____ Signed: _____

(Chairperson of Board of Management) (Principal)

Date: _____ Date: _____

Date of next review: May 2018

Appendix A: Practical Tips for Teachers

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.
- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate 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.