

# Policy on Bullying



"Live as free people"

## St Peter's Community School

Reviewed October 2022

**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. Peter's 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
  - promotes respectful relationships across the school community
- Effective leadership
- A school-wide approach
- A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact
- Have established education and intervention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that:
  - build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils
  - 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.
- Aim to resolve any issues and restore relationships as quickly as possible

**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. Some examples of bullying behaviour are listed in Appendix 1 however this list is not exhaustive.

**4.** The relevant teacher the incident is reported to for investigating and dealing with bullying is the Year Head. If the relevant teacher cannot resolve the issue it will be referred onto the Chaplain, Guidance Counsellor, Deputy Principal and 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: -

#### **School-wide Approach**

- The school aims to maintain and further enhance a positive school culture and climate which encourages respect, trust, care, consideration and support for all members of the school community by providing effective leadership in relation to anti bullying measures.
- The school aims to develop a shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it. This will be done by a whole staff professional development on bullying. It is hoped these discussions will lead to a school wide approach to deal with bullying behaviour.
- 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.
- Involvement of the Student's Council in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Buddy System that helps to support a culture of peer support and respect and An Anti-Bullying Awareness week.
- Promotion of the Anti-Bullying code in student journals
- Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders taking responsibility for what they witness.
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell.

#### **Educational strategies**

##### **Cross-curricular Approaches**

St. Peters Community School aims to make provision for exploring bullying and its inter-related areas on a cross-curricular level. The issues explored across a diverse range of subjects such as:

1. The SPHE curriculum makes specific provision for exploring bullying and many inter related areas.
2. The RSE programme provides opportunities to explore, such areas as human sexuality and relationships, which has particular relevance to identity based bullying.
3. CSPE provides opportunities for students to examine online privacy in the context of rights and responsibilities, raise awareness of cyber bullying in their school communities, and create a class school charter of online rights and responsibilities.
4. Physical Education classes and sporting activities including hurling, football, camogie and ladies football, can provide opportunities for channelling and learning how to control aggression. They also provide an opportunity to build school spirit.
5. All subjects allow space to foster an attitude of respect for all.
6. Student talks and seminars are organised in the school by Teachers, Chaplain and Guidance Counsellor.

## **Preventative strategies**

1. The school aims to provide effective supervision of pupils by:
  - (a) Identifying 'hotspots'(that being where bullying incidents are most likely to occur)
    - Corridors at break-times
    - Travelling on school buses
    - Empty classrooms
    - Toilets
    - The changing rooms
  - (b) Identifying 'hot times' (that being when bullying incidents are most likely to occur)
    - At the start of the school day
    - Break times
    - The changeover of classes
    - At the end of the school day as pupils leave school
2. At appropriate opportunities, teachers will explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour consists of both in class and around the school.
3. Relevant maxims/posters are displayed in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school
4. The school 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 pupils with a disability or SEN.
5. The school gives constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
6. The school has a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines. Desired respectful behaviour will be acknowledged. Examples include 'Barr Bua Awards. A collaborative 'buddy System' between transition year, fifth year and first year students is in operation.
7. The school explicitly teaches pupils about the appropriate use of social media and invites outside agencies and speakers to work with students on the issues surrounding social media.
8. Pupils are positively encouraged to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use. There is appropriate follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.
9. The school highlights and explicitly teaches school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas, particularly at the beginning of the school year. Tutorial classes provide an opportunity for rules to be discussed. It is a requirement that all parents and students sign a code of behaviour, which is agreed by all parties, thereby agreeing to abide by the rules of the school community.
10. All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour. In the event of concern staff can consult the relevant teachers (Year Heads).
11. The school supports the establishment and work of student councils. Meetings of the council are convened regularly. Students are elected democratically.
12. All members of the school community model respectful behaviour towards each other at all times.

## **6. The schools 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);

It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the schools' approach from the outset;

## **D. Policy on Bullying**

## **Reporting bullying behaviour**

Any pupil/parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.

Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour are encouraged to discuss them with teachers

Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers and cleaners are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;

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

## **Investigating and dealing with incidents**

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;

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;

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. The group may be asked to meet at some point to resolve the issue.

Students may be asked to write down their account of the incident(s);

Parents of the parties involved may be contacted following investigation by the relevant Teacher, Deputy Principal or Principal. 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, they will be asked to stop it will be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied and if the pupil continues it will be referred to the Deputy Principal/Principal. If the student(s) continues to engage in bullying behaviour sanctions outlined in the Code of Behaviour are imposed up to suspension and/or expulsion.

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 and recording**

In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher will, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:

- a) Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
- b) Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
- c) Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable; and
- d) Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents 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. This can have a therapeutic effect;

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.

### **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:

All staff record on a bullying referral form (Appendix 2) of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. The forms will be filed for each year group.

The relevant teacher must inform the principal of all incidents being investigated and/or raise the matter at the weekly pastoral care meeting.

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 at Appendix 2.

When the recording template is used, it must be filed by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the Deputy Principal.

All students involved will be helped to deal with the issues that arise (see section 7).

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

- All 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
  - Buddy / Peer mentoring system
  - Tutor/Year head system
  - Group work such as circle time
- If pupils require counselling of 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 should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

### **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 November 2017 and reviewed in October 2020.

**11.** 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.

**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 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: 2024.

## Appendix 1

### Examples of bullying behaviours

<p><b>General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc.</li> <li>• Physical aggression</li> <li>• Damage to property</li> <li>• Name calling</li> <li>• Slagging</li> <li>• The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person</li> <li>• Offensive graffiti</li> <li>• Extortion</li> <li>• Intimidation</li> <li>• Insulting or offensive gestures</li> <li>• The “look”</li> <li>• Invasion of personal space</li> <li>• A combination of any of the types listed</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cyber</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•<b>Denigration:</b> Spreading rumors, lies or gossip to hurt a person’s reputation</li> <li>•<b>Harassment:</b> Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual</li> <li>•<b>Impersonation:</b> Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person’s name</li> <li>•<b>Flaming:</b> Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight</li> <li>•<b>Trickery:</b> Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online</li> <li>•<b>Outing:</b> Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images</li> <li>•<b>Exclusion:</b> Purposefully excluding someone from an online group</li> <li>•<b>Cyber stalking:</b> Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Silent telephone/mobile phone call</li> <li>○ Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls</li> <li>○ Abusive text messages</li> <li>○ Abusive email</li> <li>○ Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/ Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles</li> <li>○ Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures</li> <li>○ Abusive posts on any form of communication technology</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Identity Based Behaviours</b>  <b>Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation</b>  (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community)</p>	



<b>Homophobic and Transgender</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Spreading rumours about a person’s sexual orientation</li> <li>•Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation</li> <li>•Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian...used in a derogatory manner</li> <li>•Physical intimidation or attacks</li> <li>•Threats</li> </ul>
<b>Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background</li> <li>•Exclusion on the basis of any of the above</li> </ul>
<b>Relational</b>	<p>This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Malicious gossip</li> <li>•Isolation &amp; exclusion</li> <li>•Ignoring</li> <li>•Excluding from the group</li> <li>•Taking someone’s friends away</li> <li>•Spreading rumours</li> <li>•Breaking confidence</li> <li>•Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear</li> <li>•The “look”</li> <li>•Use or terminology such as ‘nerd’ in a derogatory way</li> </ul>
<b>Sexual</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments, gestures or touching</li> <li>•Harassment</li> </ul>
<b>Special Educational Needs, Disability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Name calling</li> <li>•Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs</li> <li>•Taking advantage of some pupils’ vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying</li> <li>•Taking advantage of some pupils’ vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues.</li> <li>•Mimicking a person’s disability</li> <li>•Setting others up for ridicule</li> </ul>

**Appendix 2**

**Bullying Referral Form**

**1. Name of Pupil being bullied and Class Group:**

<b>Name</b>		<b>Class</b>	
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**2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour:**


**3. Source of bullying concern/report:**  
(Tick relevant box(es))\*

Pupil Concerned	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

**4. Location of incidents:**  
(Tick relevant box(es))\*

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other	

**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	Membership of Traveller Community	Other (specify)

**8. Brief Description of Bullying Behaviour and its Impact:**

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**9. Details of actions taken:**

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Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ (Relevant Teacher) Date: \_\_\_\_\_