

## **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. Patrick's JNS, Skerries 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

1. 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.

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*.

**General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying**

- Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc.
- Physical aggression
- Damage to property
- Name calling
- Slagging
- The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person
- Offensive graffiti
- Extortion
- Intimidation
- Insulting or offensive gestures

- The “look”
- Invasion of personal space
- A combination of any of the types listed.

## **Cyber**

- **Denigration:** Spreading rumors, lies or gossip to hurt a person’s reputation
- **Harassment:** Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual
- **Impersonation:** Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person’s name
- **Flaming:** Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight
- **Trickery:** Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online
- **Outing:** Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images
- **Exclusion:** Purposefully excluding someone from an online group
- **Cyber stalking:** Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety
  - Silent telephone/mobile phone call
  - Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls
  - Abusive text messages
  - Abusive email
  - Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/ Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles
  - Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures
  - Abusive posts on any form of communication technology

### **Identity Based Behaviours**

**Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation** (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).

#### **Homophobic and Transgender**

- Spreading rumours about a person’s sexual orientation
- Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation
- Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian...used in a derogatory manner
- Physical intimidation or attacks
- Threats

#### **Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community**

- Discrimination, prejudice, non-respectful comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background
- Exclusion on the basis of any of the above

<b>Relational</b>	<p>This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Telling a child to insult / hit / exclude another child</li> <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>• “Bitching”</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 of 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 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>

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

All class teachers  
 All permanent staff members teaching Learning Support/Resource  
 The Principal  
 The Deputy Principal

All substitute teachers and teachers covering Resource Hours are asked to report any incident of bullying behaviour of which they become aware to the child(ren)’s class teacher(s) and the Principal.

**Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it. (e.g. if the class teacher is unavailable because if he or she is on extended sick leave)**

5. 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. Pupils will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.
- 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.
- An annual audit of professional development needs with a view to assessing staff requirements through internal staff knowledge/expertise and external sources
- Professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teacher(s)
- 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 vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.
- Involvement of the student body in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Buddy system, mentoring, Lunchtime Pals and other student support activities that can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- Promotion of the Anti-Bullying code 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). Parents must sign to indicate that they have read and understood the school's Code of Behaviour, Discipline for Life and Anti-Bullying Policy before their child is enrolled in the school.
- The implementation of regular (e.g. per year/per term/per month/per week) whole school awareness measures e.g. a dedicated notice board in the school and classrooms on the promotion of friendship, and bullying prevention; annual Friendship Week and parent(s)/guardian(s) seminars; regular school or year group assemblies by principal.
- Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. 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.

- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.:
  - Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
  - Hand note up with homework.
  - Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
  - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Identify clear protocols to encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied. The protocol should be developed in consultation with parents.
- St. Patrick's JNS Discipline for Learning code, the Code of Behaviour and the Anti-Bullying Policy and Code (included in Appendix ? to this document) are given to parents of all new pupils and it is a condition of enrolment in the school that parents agree to abide by these codes.
- The anti-bullying code is displayed in each classroom. The anti-bullying code and the code of behaviour are printed in the homework journals (first and second classes).
- The school's Anti-bullying code is explicitly taught from the very beginning of Junior Infants onwards. Throughout the school day frequent opportunities arise to refer to and reinforce the school's code of behaviour and the anti-bullying code. These opportunities are fully availed of.
- Programmes currently used to support the teaching of the Code of Behaviour and the Anti-Bullying Policy include:
  - The SPHE programme
  - "Walk Tall"
  - "Stay Safe"
  - The "Alive-O" RSE programme
- As new programmes come on-stream they will be evaluated and where they are useful and age appropriate they will be incorporated into the School Plan for SHPE.

### **Implementation of curricula**

- The full implementation of the SPHE curriculum and the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes suitable for the Junior Primary School.
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes at primary and post- primary level. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardaí, 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.

- The school will implement the advice in “Sexual Orientation advice for schools” (RSE Primary, see booklet).

#### **Links to other policies**

- Other school policies, practices and activities which are particularly relevant to bullying are:
  - Code of Behaviour
  - Discipline for Learning
  - Child Protection Policy
  - Supervision of pupils
  - Acceptable Use policy
  - Attendance Policy.

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 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 and parent(s) or 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 in the school.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher (normally the class teacher(s) of the child / children involved) in consultation with the principal.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers, 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**

- 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;
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.
- Where possible, incidents should be 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.
- 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/her 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 may face them from the other members of the group after the 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 parent(s)/guardian(s) 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 parent(s)/guardian(s) an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the pupils.
- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should 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.
- It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parent(s)/guardian(s)) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her 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:

#### **Informal- pre-determination that bullying has occurred**

- All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them in their own class observation notebook. All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher (normally the class teacher(s) of the child / children involved).
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. The relevant teacher must keep a written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.
- The relevant teacher must inform the principal of all incidents being investigated.

#### **Formal Stage 1-determination that bullying has occurred**

- If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved. These records to be kept in the teacher's own class observations notebook.
- All teachers' class observations notebooks to be handed in to the Principal's office for storage at the end of the school year.

#### **Formal Stage 2-Appendix 3 (From DES Procedures)**

The relevant teacher must use the recording template at **Appendix 3** of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 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.

The school should list behaviours that must be recorded and reported immediately to the principal. These should be in line with the school's code of behaviour.

**A pattern of repeated incidents (3 or more) of aggressive or manipulative behaviour by one pupil in respect of the same pupil or a number of different pupils, even where each individual incident has been resolved within a 20 day timeframe.**

**When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal. The teacher's copy should be kept securely until the end of the year, and then given to the Principal for safe keeping.**

**Records will be retained in the office until the pupils in question have reached the age of 21 years.**

#### **Established intervention strategies**

- 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
- Implementing sociogram questionnaires

The Procedures mention the following intervention strategies and reference Ken Rigby;

[www.bullyingawarenessweek.org/pdf/BullyingPreventionStrategiesinSchoolsKenRigby.pdf](http://www.bullyingawarenessweek.org/pdf/BullyingPreventionStrategiesinSchoolsKenRigby.pdf)

- The traditional disciplinary approach
- Strengthening the victim
- Mediation
- Restorative Practice
- The Support Group Method
- The Method of Shared Concern

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
  - Group work such as circle time
  - LSR social groups
- 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 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.

- monitoring and supervision practices in the school:
  - Children are adequately supervised in classrooms and on yard, during class time and recreation.
  - Three teachers and all SNAs supervise children on yard during the 10.30 - 10.40 a.m. and the 12.00 - 12.30 p.m. breaks.
  - During wet day recreation children remain in their own classrooms. Activities are provided for the children. SNAs remain in classrooms with their charges. Supervising teachers move between classrooms frequently.
- Bullying "danger spots":
  - Children are more likely to be vulnerable to bullying behaviour during those times when children are less tightly supervised, for example at the beginning /end of yard time when they are standing in their lines, during wet day recreation.

/...

- Support measures to counteract bullying behaviour:
  - All staff of St. Patrick's JNS are aware of and actively implement all measures in this policy.
  - There is a strong sense of community and co-operation between the Board of Management, staff, pupils and parents, and each has a clear role in the prevention of bullying. Through a programme of positive action, the school promotes an atmosphere of friendship, respect and tolerance. This is evident in the success of our Discipline for Learning programme.
  - The SPHE curriculum, including the Walk Tall and Stay Safe programmes, is used throughout the school to support the anti-bullying policy.
  - Positive self-esteem is fostered among the pupils by celebrating individual differences/achievements, by acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour and by providing opportunities for success.
  - Pupils are helped to develop empathy by discussing feelings and by trying to put themselves in the place of others. Circle time is used as a teaching strategy to prevent bullying and as a remedial strategy in cases where bullying has occurred.
  - Teachers respond sensitively to pupils who disclose incidents of bullying.
  - The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed regularly with pupils.
  - Staff are particularly vigilant in monitoring pupils who are considered at risk of bullying / being bullied.
  - All disclosed incidents of bullying are investigated.
  - Members of the Board of Management are familiar with the school's policy on bullying and through the principal, actively promote it on a repeated basis among staff, parents and pupils.
  - Parents contribute to and support the school's policy on bullying by encouraging positive behaviour both at home and at school, by being vigilant for signs and symptoms that their child is being bullied or is bullying others, by communicating concerns to the school.
  - All policies are available to parents with most (including the anti-bullying policy) available on the web page.
- How will pupils, in particular senior pupils, be involved as a resource to assist in counteracting bullying? In this regard, has a mentoring/buddy system been considered?
  - All pupils are aware that our school code is "Kind Words, Kind Hands, Kind Actions" and if they see a child not following the code they can take the following actions:
    - Play with a child who has been left out
    - Tell a teacher
- In relation to Acceptable Use Policy :
  - The main use of the internet in St. Patrick's JNS is as a method of accessing lessons for use on interactive white boards.
  - Where individual children or small groups of children are using the internet for educational purposes, the teacher will access the site being used and the specific resources in use on that site. Children are not allowed to click away from the site being used and where this happens by accident must immediately inform their teacher so that they can be quickly and safely returned to the site being used.
  - All Internet sessions are supervised by a teacher.

- Where pupils are instructed in the use of email or where this is in use for educational purposes, pupils are instructed to use only approved class accounts for email purposes and to use these only under teacher supervision.
- Pupils do not access chat rooms or discussion fora during school time. (Note that the Schools Broadband Programme has blocked all social networking sites on the basis that they waste time and take up too much of the bandwidth which is been provided for educational purposes only).



# St. Patrick's Junior School

TENNIS COURT LANE, SKERRIES, CO. DUBLIN.

Principal: Máire Ní Chróinín

Deputy Principal: Ann Bowe

R. N. 16333Q

Tel/Fax: 8490836

## 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 as 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 \_\_\_\_\_ [date].

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: \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Chairperson of Board of Management) (Principal)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of next review: **June 2015**

○