



St. Patrick's Junior School

TENNIS COURT LANE, SKERRIES, CO. DUBLIN.

K34 D799

Principal: Máire Ní Chróinín

Roll Number: 16333Q

Deputy Principal: Lynsey Dungan

RCN: 20118839

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 Junior National School ("the 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 of 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:



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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*.

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows: (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

All class teachers

All Additional Needs Teachers

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 or any disclosure in relation to the child(ren)'s class teacher and to the principal.

Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it (e.g. if the class teacher is unavailable due to being on extended sick leave).

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 (see Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

School Wide Approach

The school maintains a school wide approach to fostering respect for all members of the school community.

The school promotes and nurtures the value of diversity throughout the school. This is valuable in addressing issues of prejudice and stereotyping and to highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.

The school fosters and endeavours to enhance the self esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Pupils are provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.

Whole staff professional development on bullying is provided where needed to ensure that all staff members develop an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it through prevention and intervention.

The school conducts an annual audit of professional development needs with a view to assessing staff requirements through internal staff knowledge/expertise and external sources.

There is specific focus in professional development in the school on the training of relevant teachers

All members of the school community are included in awareness raising and, where relevant, training on all aspects of bullying.

All members of staff in the school are aware of the importance of supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff are vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. In general in our Junior School, pupils do not use communication technology (social media, messaging apps, text messaging etc) while in school. Where pupils use communication technology in the school as part of a lesson, this is directly supervised by a staff member.

Our behaviour rules are based around the concept of Kindness – Kind Hands, Kind Words, Kind Actions. These rules are age appropriate and easy to understand and are reinforced with great frequency.

Pupils in the school are involved in contributing to a safe school environment. Two Kindness Ambassadors are appointed in each class on a rota basis to support those who can't find friends to play with while on yard. Frequent reinforcement of our age appropriate anti-bullying code both through the SPHE curriculum and informally in class when appropriate supports pupils and encourages a culture of peer respect and support.

The school's Anti-Bullying code is included in the homework 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 parents/guardians are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school on enrolment. Parents must sign to indicate that they have read and understood the school's Code of Behaviour, Discipline for Learning and Anti-Bullying Policy before their child is enrolled in the school.

The school implements regular whole school awareness measures as follows:

Respect for peers and staff is constantly promoted and reinforced through daily use of our "Kindness" rules: Kind Hands, Kind Words, Kind Actions.

Classrooms have “check in” areas where pupils can let teacher know how they are feeling (by clipping a peg with their name on it to a happy/sad/angry/worried etc face).

Classrooms have a “worry box” where pupils can post a note describing their worries. Due to the young age of our pupils, in most cases the pupil tells their parent and the parent contacts the school with details of bullying incidents. When teachers are contacted in this way they take the report seriously and take immediate action appropriate to the situation in question.

Kindness rules are displayed in classrooms and around the school.

The school encourages a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. The school’s anti bullying code states that the school is a “Telling” school. Pupils are taught that reporting incidents of bullying is not telling tales but behaving responsibly. It is hoped that in that way pupils will gain confidence in “telling”. It is recognised that this confidence factor is of vital importance.

The school ensures that pupils know who and how to tell, eg

- Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.

- Hand a note up with homework

- Get a parent, guardian or friend to tell on your behalf

The school ensures that bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.

Parents/Guardians should approach the class teacher/School if they suspect that their child is being bullied. The protocol for this is outlined in the Parent Teacher Communication Policy.

In St. Patrick’s JNS, the Code of Behaviour including Discipline for Learning and the Anti Bullying Policy 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 used by 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.

The school has a central focus on pupil and staff wellbeing. Good communication between home and school is encouraged and ensures that teachers are informed of issues as they arise at home and parents are informed about behaviours of concern as they occur in school.

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 RSE programme

- Amber Flag

- Roots of Empathy (when available)

- Kindness Ambassadors

- Welcome to Wellbeing/Weaving Wellbeing programmes across all class levels

- Paws B (in second class)

As new programmes come onstream they will be evaluated. Where they are useful and age appropriate, they will be incorporated into the school programme for SPHE.

Implementation of Curricula

St. Patrick's JNS fully implements the SPHE curriculum including the full RSE and Stay Safe programmes. St.Patrick's JNS.

Continuous Professional Development in this area is available to staff.

There is school wide delivery of age appropriate lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes suitable for the Junior Primary School.

When possible, pupils are visited once during the School year by a Community Garda. Lessons delivered by the Community Garda at Junior Primary level cover issues around personal safety.

The school implements the advice in "Sexual Orientation Advice for Schools" (RSE Primary)

Links to other Policies, Practices, Activities

Other school policies, practices and activities which are particularly relevant to bullying are listed below. This anti-bullying policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies.

Policies:

- Code of Behaviour
- Discipline for Learning
- Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment
- Supervision of Pupils
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Wellbeing Policy

Practices/Activities:

- Classroom "Wellness Wall"
- Amber Flag
- Kindness Ambassadors
- Parent Teacher Communication 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 (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

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 parents/guardians) understand this approach from the outset.

Reporting Bullying Behaviour

Any pupil or parent/guardian 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 of the child/ren involved), in consultation with the principal).

Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, Special Needs Assistants (SNAs) caretakers, cleaners etc 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 (normally the classroom teacher/s of the pupils involved) will exercise their professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.

Parents/guardians 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 take a calm, unemotional approach to resolving the situation

Where possible, incidents should be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all pupils 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 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 their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements. Each member of the 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/guardian 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 parents/guardians an opportunity of discussing the ways in which they can reinforce and 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 engaging in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to them how they are in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get them to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied. It must also be made clear to all pupils and parents involved that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, their 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 their 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/guardians 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 pupils who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.

Where a parent/guardian is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures the parent/guardian must be referred as appropriate to the school's complaints procedures

In the event that a parent/guardain has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent/guardian 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 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 their efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved. All teachers' observation notebooks to be handed in to the principal's office for storage at the end of the year.

Formal Stage 2 – Appendix 3 Form (Dept of Education 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 they consider that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after they have determined that bullying behaviour has 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 to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable:

A pattern of repeated incidents (three 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 all pupils

Negotiating arrangements 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 parents/guardians to support school interventions

No blame approach

Circle Time

Restorative interviews

Restorative conferencing

Implementing sociogram questionnaires

Strengthening the victim

Mediation

Restorative Practice

The Support Group Method

The Method of Shared Concern

Use of strategies from the "Incredible Teachers" programme (Carolyn Webster-Stratton, PhD).

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*):

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, eg

Pastoral care system

Buddy/peer mentoring system

Group work such as circle time

Social groups (under supervision of Additional Needs Teachers)

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 the pupil 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 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 the 9th of April 2024.

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: V. Rev. Fr. Melvyn Mullins
Very Rev. Fr. Melvyn Mullins,
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: 9/4/2024

Date of next review: April 2025

Signed: Maire Ní Chróinín
Maire Ní Chróinín
Principal

Date: 09/04/2024