

Draft Anti-Bullying Policy St. Aidan's N.S. Kiltimagh Roll No. 19903A

Introduction

Compliance with legislation

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. Aidan's N.S., Kiltimagh has drafted 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.

Key Principles of Best Practice

The Board of Management of St. Aidan's N.S. 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) A positive school culture and climate
 - which is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity,
 - which encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
 - promotes respectful relationships across the school community;
- b) Effective leadership;
- c) A school-wide approach;
- d) A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
- e) 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.
- f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
- g) Supports for staff;
- h) Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
- i) On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

Definition of bullying

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:

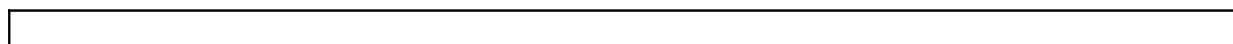
- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
- cyber-bullying and
- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational 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.

Examples of bullying behaviours



<p>General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
<p>Cyber</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures •Abusive posts on any form of communication technology
<p>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).</p>	
<p>Homophobic and Transgender</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •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
<p>Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background • Exclusion on the basis of any of the above
<p>Relational</p>	<p>This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Malicious gossip •Isolation & exclusion •Ignoring •Excluding from the group •Taking someone’s friends away •“Bitching” •Spreading rumours •Breaking confidence •Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear •The “look” •Use or terminology such as ‘nerd’ in a derogatory way

Sexual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching •Harassment
Special Educational Needs, Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name calling • Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs • Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying • Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues. • Mimicking a person's disability • Setting others up for ridicule

Roles and Responsibilities

The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:

- Class teachers initially deal with the initial allegation/suspicion of bullying behaviour
- Principal /Deputy Principal is informed where bullying behaviour is suspected by the class teacher

All members of the school staff will be mindful and observant of the possibility of bullying in the school environment.

Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

Strategies for Education and Prevention

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.
- 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 encouraged to 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 students 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.
- Development and promotion of an 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.
- 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; regular school or year group assemblies by principal, deputy principal, etc.
- 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.
 - Make a phone call to the school or to a trusted teacher in the school.
 - Anti-bully or Niggle box?
 - Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
 - Administer a confidential questionnaire once a term to all pupils.
 - 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.
- Acceptable Use Policy in place in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that access to technology in school is strictly monitored, as is the pupils' use of mobile phones.

Implementation of curricula

- The full implementation of the SPHE, the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.
- The SPHE curriculum makes specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the inter-related areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships.
- The Stay Safe programme at primary level is a personal safety skills programme which seeks to enhance children's self-protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying.
- The Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) programme at primary provides opportunities to explore and discuss areas such as human sexuality and relationships, which has particular relevance to identity-based bullying.
- Various other social, health and media education programmes can further help to address the problem of bullying behaviour. For example aspects of the Walk Tall provide guidance on developing a health promoting school.
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes at primary level. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardai, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying.
- There is space within the teaching of all subjects to foster an attitude of respect for all: to promote the value of diversity; to address prejudice and stereotyping and to highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- In English, there is a wide range of literature available which could be used to stimulate discussion. The work could be extended into many other areas such as Art, Drama, Religious Education, and Physical Education.
- Co-operation and group enterprise is promoted through team sports, school clubs and societies as well as through practical subjects. Sporting activities in particular can provide excellent opportunities for channelling and learning how to control aggression.
- The school will implement prevention and awareness raising measures will also deal explicitly with cyber-bullying. Cyber bullying includes (but is not limited to) communicating via electronic means with the objective of causing hurt, fear, embarrassment, humiliation, alarm and/or distress to one or more persons. Cyber bullying includes the use of mobile phones and the internet with the objective of upsetting someone. *Unlike other forms of bullying a once –off posting can constitute bullying.* The best way to address cyber-bullying is to prevent it happening in the first place. Prevention and any awareness raising measures will focus on educating pupils on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while on-line and also on developing a culture of reporting any concerns about cyber-bullying. A school-wide approach involving school management, staff, parents and pupils is of importance in this regard. The prevention and awareness raising measures should also take into account the scope for cyber-bullying to occur as a result of access to technology from within the school. No pupil is allowed on the internet without teacher supervision. St. Aidan's N.S.' internet is filtered and access is blocked to inappropriate web sites, apps. etc. St. Aidan's Acceptable Use Policy will be complied with at all times by teachers and staff. Pupil mobile phones are not allowed in St. Aidan's N.S. Gardai visit the school from time to time and talk about cyber bullying. Teachers will dedicate standalone lesson/lessons to deal with the issue of cyber bullying.
- Our school's approach to tackling and preventing bullying will take particular account of the needs of pupils with disabilities or with SEN. This policy will link with the Special Needs Policy and other relevant school policies and supports to ensure that all the services that provide for such pupils work together. Approaches to decreasing the likelihood of bullying for pupils with SEN will include improving inclusion, focusing on developing social skills, paying attention to key moments such as transitioning from primary to post-primary and cultivating a good school culture which has respect for all and helping one another as central. The school will involve outside agencies such as

NEPS to provide support to a SEN pupil who is a victim of bullying or involved in bullying behaviour.

- Our school's prevention and awareness raising measures need to be appropriate to the type of bullying and take into account the age and gender of the pupils involved. Each school must work to raise the awareness of bullying so that all members of the school community understand what bullying is and how the school deals with bullying behaviour.

Links to other policies

- School policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to bullying include the Code of Behaviour, the Child Protection Policy, the supervision of pupils, the Acceptable Use policy, the Attendance Policy and sporting activities.

Procedures to deal with Bullying

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:

Procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying

The Board of Management of St. Aidan's N.S. will ensure that the school has clear procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying and these are set out as follows:

- (i) The primary aim for the relevant teacher 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);
- (ii) In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
- (iii) 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;
- (iv) Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;
- (v) 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;
- (vi) It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset;
- (vii) Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents;
- (viii) Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
- (ix) 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;
- (x) 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;

(xi) 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;

(xii) Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face them from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher;

(xiii) It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s);

(xiv) In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken. 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;

(xv) 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;

(xvi) 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;

(xvii) 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.

(xviii) 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 attached to this Anti-Bullying Policy.

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; and
- Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal;

(xx) If any Child Protection issues are noted during the bullying investigation, these issues must be reported as per the Children First Guidelines 2011 and the school's Child Protection Policy.

(XX1) If an individual (whether victim or bully) needs specific support, a referral will be made to NEPS for specific help for this individual.

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 (see Parental Complaints Procedure);

(xxi) 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.

Procedures for recording bullying behaviour

The Board of Management must ensure that the school has clear procedures for the formal noting and reporting of bullying behaviour. All records must be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour must adhere to the following:

(i) While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher will use 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 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.

(iii) The relevant teacher must use the recording template attached to this policy to record the bullying behaviour.

In each of the circumstances at (i) and (ii) above, the recording template must be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying

A programme of support for pupils who have been bullied must be in place. Such pupils may need counselling and/or opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed.

A programme of support for those pupils involved in bullying behaviour must also be part of the school's intervention process. Pupils involved in bullying behaviour need assistance on an ongoing basis. For those with low self-esteem, opportunities should be developed to increase feelings of self-worth. It is, therefore, important that the learning strategies applied within the school allow for the enhancement of the pupil's self-worth. Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.

Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour should be encouraged to discuss them with teachers.

Ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy

The effectiveness of the school's anti-bullying policy should be subject to continuous review in the light of incidents of bullying behaviour encountered. The school should make provision for periodic examination of the prevention and intervention strategies in place.

The template for recording and reporting bullying to the school Principal or Deputy Principal will be a valuable and readily accessible source of data in relation to bullying behaviour in the school. Data gathered from these reports must be regularly (at least once in every school year) collated and analysed with a view to monitoring levels of bullying behaviour and identifying any particular issues that require attention or any significant trends in behaviour. A record of this analysis must be retained and be made available to the Board of Management. Appropriate responses to any issues identified should be drawn up and implemented.

It is recommended that the implementation and effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy be included as an agenda item for staff meetings so as to ensure that concerns about the policy or the welfare of individual pupils can be shared and effectively addressed.

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.

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.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website, is readily available to parents and pupils on request and is provided to the Parents Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

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 this review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: Fr Paddy Kilcoyne
Chairperson of the BoM

Signed: Mairead King
Principal

Date: 13/10/2014

Date: 13/10/2014

Date of next review: _____