

St. Joseph's N.S., Leitrim Village, Roll No:01125B

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. Joseph's 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 of St. Joseph'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 positive school culture and climate which-
 - is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
 - encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
 - promotes respectful relationships across the school community;
- Effective leadership;
- A school-wide approach;
- A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that-
 - build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
 - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
- Supports for staff;
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

3. In accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* bullying is defined as follows:

Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted, by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

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

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* and in appendix 4: Types of bullying, attached.

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

- The class teacher(s) initially. This includes substitute teachers
- The principal thereafter, if necessary.
- Any teacher can act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

The B.O.M and staff of St. Joseph's N.S. believe that the above staged approach to dealing with bullying works best.

5. The education and prevention strategies that will be used in St. Joseph's N.S. to combat bullying (including cyber bullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying) are as follows: -

5.1 School awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour

The BOM and staff of St. Joseph's N.S. believe that awareness of bullying is essential to the elimination of bullying. There is a strong sense of community and co-operation between Board of Management, staff, pupils and parents, and each has a clear role in the prevention of bullying. By employing the following strategies, the school will emphasise that bullying is unacceptable:

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- o entire school community (pupils, parents, staff and BOM) have a shared understanding of what bullying behaviour is.
- o Through a programme of positive action, the school promotes an atmosphere of friendship, respect and tolerance.
- o The school will hold a 'Friendship Week' at regular intervals during the school year to highlight the importance of friendship.
- o The SPHE curriculum, including the Walk Tall and Stay Safe programmes, is used throughout the school to support the anti-bullying policy. Circle time and role play will be employed.
- o Teachers will use both the formal and informal curriculum to emphasise that bullying is unacceptable... visual arts activities, posters, drama, role play, SPHE, cooperative games...
- o Sporting activities may be used as an opportunity for channelling and learning how to control aggression and other emotions

- o 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.
- o Pupils are helped to develop empathy by discussing feelings and by trying to put themselves in the place of others.
- o Teachers respond sensitively to pupils who disclose incidents of bullying.
- o The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed regularly with the pupil, both in class and at assembly.
- o The staff are particularly vigilant in monitoring pupils who are considered at risk of bullying/ being bullied.
- o All members of staff have a duty to report incidents of bullying.
- o All disclosed incidents of bullying are investigated.
- o Members of the BOM are familiar with the school's policy on bullying and actively promote it on a repeated basis among staff, parents and pupils.
- o 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 and by communicating concerns to the school.
- o All pupils are made aware of the 3 R's of combating bullying behaviour: - Recognise, Reject and Report
- o All pupils are made aware of the important role of bystanders when combating bullying. (Bad things happen when good people do nothing)

5.2 Adequate supervision practices as a strategy for prevention of bullying behaviour

- o All sections of the playground are supervised at break times. All doors to the yard are locked once all children are outside. A maximum of three children are allowed back into the school at break time to go to the toilet (at any one time). This is carefully monitored by the supervising adult.
- o The staff have identified possible areas where bullying behaviour could take place. These areas, known as 'Hot Spots' are: - behind the shelter, behind the school and the small area between Junior Infant and Third class classrooms. Children are frequently reminded, at assemblies and by staff on yard duty, not to play in these areas.
- o Corridors, cloakrooms and toilets are monitored.
- o On wet days children remain in their classrooms, seated. Two/ three monitors (sixth class pupils) will remain in the classroom for the duration of the break. The classroom door will remain open and the teachers on duty will circulate between classrooms.
- o The staff have identified times where there is greater potential for bullying behaviour to take place. These times, known as 'Hot times' are break times and lunch times. The staff have developed a Supervision Policy to include these times.
- o See the school policy on Supervision for full details.

5.3 Strategies for the prevention of cyber bullying

5.3.1 What is cyber-bullying?

Cyber bullying is the use of ICT (usually a mobile phone and/ or the internet) to abuse another person. It can take place anywhere and involve many people. Anybody can be targeted including pupils and school staff. It can include threats, intimidation, harassment, cyber-stalking, vilification, defamation, exclusion, peer rejection, impersonation, unauthorized

publication of private information or images etc.

5.3.2 Types of cyber bullying

There are many types of cyber-bullying. The more common types are:

1. **Text messages** – can be threatening or cause discomfort. Also included here is ‘Bluejacking’ (the sending of anonymous text messages over short distances using bluetooth wireless technology)
2. **Picture/video-clips via mobile phone cameras** – images sent to others to make the victim feel threatened or embarrassed
3. **Mobile phone calls** – silent calls, abusive messages or stealing the victim’s phone and using it to harass others, to make them believe the victim is responsible
4. **Emails** – threatening or bullying emails, often sent using a pseudonym or somebody else’s name
5. **Chat room bullying** – menacing or upsetting responses to children or young people when they are in a web-based chat room
6. **Instant messaging (IM)** – unpleasant messages sent while children conduct real-time conversations online using MSM (Microsoft Messenger), Yahoo Chat or similar tools
7. **Bullying via websites** – use of defamatory blogs (web logs), personal websites and online personal ‘own web space’ sites such as You Tube, Facebook, Ask.fm, Bebo (which works by signing on in one’s school, therefore making it easy to find a victim) and Myspace – although there are others.

This list is not exhaustive/ definitive and may be added to at any time as the need arises or as technology develops.

5.3.3 Procedures to prevent Cyber Bullying

The BOM and staff of St. Joseph’s N.S believe that the best way of dealing with Cyber bullying is to prevent it happening in the first place. While pupils are not allowed bring mobile phones to school (see school policy on Mobile Phones), pupils are always supervised while using internet in school and social media sites are blocked and cannot be accessed in school pupils may still experience cyber bullying.

In St. Joseph’s N.S.: -

- Pupils are taught appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while on line and to report any concerns about cyber bullying.
- Staff, pupils, parents and BOM are made aware of issues surrounding cyber bullying
- Pupils will be urged to report and discuss all incidents of cyber bullying with their parents.
- Staff CPD (Continuous Professional Development) will assist in learning about current technologies
- Pupils will learn about cyber bullying through Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), assemblies, friendship week activities and other curriculum projects
- Parents will be provided with information and advice on how to combat cyber bullying
- Pupils, parents and staff will be involved in reviewing and revising this policy and school procedure
- All reports of cyber bullying will be investigated and discussed with parents
- The school will engage a speaker (Gardaí) to facilitate a workshop on cyber bullying for 5th and 6th classes, subject to Gardaí resources and availability.
- The gardaí will be contacted in cases of actual or suspected illegal content

5.3.4 Information for Pupils

Each year, mainstream teacher in Senior Classes will teach specific S.P.H.E. lessons on the issue of cyber bullying. These lessons will be set at and contain information at an age level appropriate to the class. The Gardaí will be invited to talk to pupils in 5th and 6th class on the topic of cyber bullying. This will depend on Gardaí resources and availability.

5.3.5 Information for Parents

Parents will receive information on all lessons conducted in school on the topic of Cyber bullying. Parents will be asked to sign lesson worksheets/ copies. Parents will also be directed to www.webwise.ie for further information and booklets on the topic of cyber-bullying.

The following general recommendations are also made to parents: -

- Keep any/ all PC's and/ or laptops in a family room, such as a sitting room.
- Supervise children's on-line activity at home.
- Do not allow children access to social media sites such as 'facebook'. These sites already have an age limit.
- Do not purchase a mobile phone, laptop, i-pad etc for a child until they are old enough to use it responsibly

5.4 Homophobic and transphobic bullying

The use of any type of offensive language is not tolerated in St. Joseph's N.S. In St. Joseph's N.S. the management and staff believe in the following quotation: -

'Equality isn't just the right to be treated the same but the right to be different'.

The BOM, teachers and staff model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times. Pupils will be explicitly taught what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school. 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 will be consistently tackled. Pupils will be given constructive feedback when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent. Reward systems will be in place to promote and reward the desired behaviours.

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: -

6.1 Procedures for Investigating all Bullying Behaviour

Aim

In St. Joseph's N.S. the primary aim for the relevant teacher in investigation and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationship of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame).

1. In investigating and dealing with allegations of bullying behaviour, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether or not bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
2. All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will 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 will 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.

3. Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners will be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.
4. **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 relationship of the parties involved as quickly as possible.**
5. It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset.
6. Teachers will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.
7. Initial investigations of bullying will be done quietly and discretely in the classroom. Some incidents might be best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure privacy for all involved. These investigations may be carried out at break times with another person present.
8. All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved, may be interviewed to provide very useful information.
9. When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher will seek answers to questions of **what, where, when, who and why**. This will be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
10. If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first (as outlined in 7 above). Thereafter, all those involved will be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member will be asked for his/ her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements.
11. Each member of the group will be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher.
12. It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident.
13. **In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved will 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 will give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the support for their pupils.**
14. Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts will be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
15. **It will 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.**
16. Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved will 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.
17. 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 3 attached**.

18. 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 relationship between the parties have been restored as is practicable and
 - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal.
19. Where a parent is not satisfied that the school had dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents will be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures. A copy of the school Complaints Procedure is contained in the school Information Booklet which can be accessed on the school website www.leitrim-ns.ie The steps are as follows, 1. Class teacher, 2. Principal, 3. Chairperson of B.O.M, 4. B.O.M
20. In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school will advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

6. 2 Procedures for recording bullying behaviour

1. While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will 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.
2. If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher will keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationship of the parties involved.
3. The relevant teacher must use the recording template at **Appendix 3** 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.

In each of the circumstances at (a) and (b) above, the recording template at **Appendix 3** will be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

6.3 Intervention Strategies

In St. Joseph's N.S. teachers will use one or a combination of the following intervention strategies when dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour: -

- The Traditional Disciplinary Approach
- Strengthening the Victim
- Mediation
- Restorative practice
- The Support Group Method and
- The Method of Shared Concern.

The teachers are fully aware that no one intervention will work in all situations and all teachers have a copy of the PDST Anti-Bullying Support Material booklet which outlines the above strategies in detail.

7. Programmes of support

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying involves a whole school approach. This includes school policies (Code of Behaviour, Supervision, Mobile phones etc), S.P.H.E. lessons, Walk Tall programme, Stay Safe Programme, Circle time, Role Play and helping the pupils see others view-points. Given the complexity of bullying behaviour, no one intervention/ support programme works in all situations. Therefore, various approaches and intervention strategies may be used including suggesting that parents seek referrals so that appropriate outside agencies can assist in order to further support the pupils and their families as needed.

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.

- Buddy / Peer mentoring 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 (HSE, NEPS, CAMS, Gardaí, NPC). 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. See Supervision Policy for more information

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 16th January 2014 and has immediate effect. This policy was reviewed by the BOM on 4th March 2015, 10th March 2016, 9th March 2017, 8th March 2018, 9th May 2019 and on 18th June 2020. Parents, pupils and staff were consulted in the review process.

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website, a hard copy issued to all parents through the school communications letter and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills 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, communicated to parents through the communication letter 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 of Education and Skills.

Signed: _____ Signed: _____

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

(Principal)

Date: 18/06/2020

Date: 18/06/2020

Date of next review: March to June 2021

Attachments to this Policy

Appendix 1: Practical tips for building a positive school culture.

Appendix 2: Adult Bully. **School Staff Only**

Appendix 3: Template for recording bullying behaviour.

Appendix 4. Types of bullying

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The following are some practical tips for immediate actions that can be taken to help build a positive school culture and climate and to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour.

- Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times
- Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school
- Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages
- Catch them being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention
- Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN
- Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent
- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines
- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media
- Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use
- Follow-up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules
- Actively involve parents and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media
- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school
- Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas
- All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour
- Ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision
- School staff can get pupils to help them to identify bullying 'hot spots' and 'hot times' for bullying in the school

Appendix 3. Template for recording bullying behaviour.

1. Name and class of pupil being bullied

Name: _____ Class: _____

2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

3. Sources of bullying concern/ report. Tick relevant box(es)

Pupil concerned	Teacher
Other pupil(s)	Other
Parent	Specify, if other

4. Location of incidents. Tick relevant box(es)

Playground	Toilets
Classroom	Other
Corridor	Specify, if other

5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concerns

6. Type of Bullying behaviour. Tick relevant box(es)

Physical aggression	Cyber bullying
Damage to property	Intimidation
Isolation/ Exclusion	Malicious gossip
Name calling	Other

7. Brief description of bullying behaviour and its impact

8. Details of action taken

Signed: _____
Relevant teacher (1)

Date: _____

Date submitted to Principal/ Deputy Principal _____

Appendix 4. Types of bullying

The following are some of the types of bullying behaviour that can occur amongst pupils:

Physical aggression: This behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While pupils often engage in 'mess fights', they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain

Intimidation: Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation. It may be based on the use of very aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon. Particularly upsetting can be a facial expression which conveys aggression and/or dislike.

Isolation/exclusion and other relational bullying: This occurs where a certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or all of the class group. This practice is usually initiated by the person engaged in bullying behaviour and can be difficult to detect. It may be accompanied by writing insulting remarks about the pupil in public places, by passing around notes about or drawings of the pupil or by whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard. Relational bullying occurs when a person's attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. One of the most common forms includes control: 'Do this or I won't be your friend anymore'(implied or stated), a group ganging up against one person (girl or boy), non-verbal gesturing, malicious gossip, spreading rumours about a person or giving them the 'silent treatment'.

Cyber-bullying: This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, email, instant messaging (IM), apps, gaming sites, chat rooms and other online technologies. Being the target of inappropriate or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying. As cyber-bullying uses technology to perpetrate bullying behaviour and does not require face-to face-contact, cyber-bullying can occur at any time (day or night). Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyber-bullying. For example, a target may be sent homophobic text messages or pictures may be posted with negative comments about a person's sexuality, appearance etc.

Name calling: Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) that hurts, insults or humiliates should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name calling of this type refers to physical appearance, e.g. size or clothes worn. Accent or distinctive voice characteristics may attract negative attention. Academic ability can also provoke name calling. This tends to operate at two extremes. There are those who are singled out for attention because they are perceived to be weak academically. At the other extreme there are those who, because they are perceived as high achievers are also targeted

Damage to property: Personal property can be the focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, school books and other learning material or interference with a pupil's locker or bicycle. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden

Extortion: Demands for money may be made, often accompanied by threats (sometimes carried out in the event of the targeted pupil not delivering on the demand). A pupil may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to another who is engaged in bullying behaviour.