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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. Mary's National 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 Procedure s for Primary and Post-Primary Schools which were published in September 2013. It aims to produce a safe and caring environment in which all children can develop to their full potential.

Aims of the Policy

- To foster a school ethos of mutual and self-respect
- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour
- To outline, promote and raise awareness of preventative approaches that can be used in response to reported incidences of bullying
- To develop a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bully behaviour
- To outline procedures for noting and reporting instances of bullying behaviour
- To outline procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour

The school has a central role in the children's social moral development just as it does in their academic development. In school, we work towards standards of behaviour based on the basic principles of honesty, respect, consideration and responsibility. The individuality of each child needs to be accommodated while at the same time acknowledging the right of every child to education in a disruption free environment.

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 all members of the school community 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
      - Encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment
      - 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
      - Explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying
   (f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils
   (g) Support for staff

(h) Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies)

(i) On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

3. In accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedure for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, in St Mary's N.S., bullying is defined as follows:
Bullying is deliberate, 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.

This definition includes a wide range of behaviour, whether verbal or written, whether physical or social, whether targeting person or property, whether carried out directly or indirectly or through any electronic or other medium, which could harm a pupil or undermine her/his self-esteem or self-confidence.

Appendix 1 gives a list of specific examples of bullying behaviour. This list is not exhaustive.

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the Anti-bullying Procedure for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

4. As this is a primary school the teacher investigating and dealing with the pupil to pupil bullying will normally be the class teacher. (Procedures 6.8.3).
Note: Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if the circumstances warrant it.

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber Bullying and identity-based bullying) 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 prejudices 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 bulling to ensure that all staff develop and awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it prevention and intervention.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra -curricular activities. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.
- Development and promotion of an Anti-bullying code for school- included in student journals, stored in classroom file holder, displayed in classrooms (A3 Posters X3) and on noticeboard inside front door near school office.
- 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 implantation of regular whole school awareness measures e.g. a dedicated notice recognised programmes (Friends for Life, Zippy's Friends, Playground Pals, Circle Time, Incredible Years); regular group assemblies by principal; parent(s)/guardian(s) seminars.
- Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. 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.

- Implementation of the school's Acceptance Use Policy to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored, as is the pupils' use of mobile phones.
- The annual implementation of Playground Pals as a means of modelling good behaviour and supporting positive relationships among junior pupils

Implementation of curricula

- The full implementation of the SPHE curriculum and the Walk Tall, RSE and Stay Safe Programmes
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on Bullying (incl. Cyber Bullying) from evidence based programmes, e.g. Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme. This may be further supported through other programmes (see Appendix 3).
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardai, 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.

Links to other policies

Hereunder is a list of school policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to bullying:

- Code of Behaviour
- Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment
- Supervision
- Attendance
- Anti-Cyber Bullying Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Mobile Phone Policy
- School Outings Policy
- Health and Safety Policy

6. The school's procedure 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 issue 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, parent(s)/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.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers, cleaners must report an incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;

Investigating and dealing with incidents

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the (relevant) teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
- 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 and safe to do so, 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 in this way;

- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner;
- If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group, if safe to do so. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for 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). This will be a standard procedure and does not necessarily imply that a pupil is guilty of misbehaviour.
- 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 ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the pupils;
- It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents(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, and in line with health and safety measures, 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 procedure for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

Informal-pre-determination that bullying has occurred

- Class teachers to be informed of any incidents
- Class teacher to record incident on Aladdin using the incident report template
- Class 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, when an investigation is completed and/or a bullying situation is resolved the 'Relevant Teacher' will complete a report, to include the findings of the investigation, the strategy adopted and the outcome of the intervention, as well as other relevant information.
- All documentation regarding bullying incidents and their resolution are to be printed and stored in the pupil's file as per GDPR retention schedule.

Formal Stage 2 – Appendix 2 (From DES Procedures)

The relevant teacher must use the recording template (see Appendix 2) to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances. (Appendix 2 can be found on Aladdin)

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) Recording template – Appendix 2 is to be completed on Aladdin, printed by the relevant teacher and given to the Principal. All recording templates given to the Principal will be retained in the pupil's file.

All documentation regarding bullying incidents and their resolution is retained securely in the school as per the GDPR retention schedule.

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 parents(s)/guardian(s) to support interventions
- No Blame Approach
- Circle Time

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.
    SPHE lessons
    Stay Safe Programme
    Walk Tall
    Friendship Week
    Buddy/Peer mentoring system
    Care Team/Student Support Team

Group work such as Circle Time
The Weaving Wellbeing Programme/Welcome to Wellbeing Programme
Friends for Life
Playground Pals.

- 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.

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 Traveller community.

10. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 3rd April 2014. It is reviewed on an annual basis.

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 Department and the Patron.

Signed: Victor O' Flynn   Signed: Noelle Lane

     (Chairperson of Board of Management)   (Principal)

Date of next review: June 2023

Appendix 1

Examples of bullying behaviours

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 rumours, 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 calls ➢ Abusive text messages ➢ Abusive email ➢ Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/ Twitter/YouTube/Instagram/Viber/Skype/SnapChat or on games consoles Abusive posts on any form of communication technology

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 a Traveller Community	➢ 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
Relational	This involves manipulating relationships as a means of b bullying. Behaviours include: ➢ Malicious gossip ➢ Isolation and exclusion ➢ Ignoring ➢ Excluding from the group ➢ Taking someone's friends away ➢ "bitching" ➢ Spreading rumours ➢ Breaking confidences ➢ Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear ➢ The "look" ➢ Use of terminology such as "nerd" in a derogatory way
Sexual	➢ Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching ➢ Harassment

Appendix 2

Appendix Template for recording bullying behaviour

1. Name _____   Class _____

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

3. Source of bullying concern/report

Pupil concerned	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

4. Location of incidents

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other	

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

6. Type of Bullying Behaviour

Physical Aggression		Cyber-bullying	
Damage to Property		Intimidation	
Isolation/Exclusion		Malicious Gossip	
Name Calling		Other (specify)	

7. When behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller Community	Other (specify)

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

9. Details of actions taken

Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher)

Date _____

Date Submitted to Principal _____

Appendix 3

Curricular Resources and Supports

Teachers may wish to draw from the following list of resources. This list is not exhaustive.

<u>Regional Aggression</u>

☐ Cool School Programme: A friend in Deed

<u>Cyber Bullying</u>

☐#UP2US
☐Be Safe- Be Web wise
☐ Think Before You Click
☐Let's Fight it Together
☐Webwise Primary Teachers' Resources

<u>Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying</u>

☐Growing UP LGBT
☐Stand Up Programme
☐The Trust Pack
☐Sexual Orientation Advice for Schools

<u>Diversity and Inter-Culturalism</u>

☐The Yellow Flag Programme