

# St. Brigid's Primary School, Kildare Town

## 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. Brigid's Primary 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
  - 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
  - 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)
- 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*.

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*):

The class teacher

The Principal

The Deputy Principal

Any teacher that is witness to bullying behaviour or to whom bullying behaviour has been reported

Anti-Bullying Coordinator

## **5. Education and Prevention Strategies**

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*):

## SPHE Programmes

- Stay Safe Programme
- Walk Tall
- Relationship & Sexuality Education

Note: The school also has, as a resource, a series of photocopiable books entitled “Bullying” (Lower/middle/upper)

- There will be targeted delivery of lessons on Cyber Bullying and Diversity and Interculturalism at the appropriate class levels.
- 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.

## **School-wide approach:**

- There is a school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.
- The value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour is promoted.
- The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Pupils will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.
- Whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develops an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils’ lives and the need to respond to it-prevention and intervention.
- An annual audit of professional development needs with a view to assessing staff requirements through internal staff knowledge/expertise and external sources
- 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 and children will be made aware of the school’s Acceptable Use Policy.
- Involvement of the student council in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Buddy system, mentoring and other student support activities that can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.

- 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 on enrolment. The code of behaviour and anti-bullying policies are also available on our website [www.sbps.ie](http://www.sbps.ie)
- The implementation of regular whole school awareness measures e.g. the promotion of friendship, and bullying prevention, annual Friendship Week & regular school assemblies.
- 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.
- Pastoral care committees meet regularly and are made aware of any vulnerable children.
- Visits by Local Community Garda to speak with children on the subject of Bullying and Cyber Bullying.
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.:
  1. Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
  2. Hand note up with homework.
  3. Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
  4. Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.

**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 :

**(NOTE: The precise procedure for dealing with bullying in St. Brigid's Primary School is outlined clearly in Appendix 1.)**

The primary aim for the relevant teacher 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);

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement, in consultation with the principal/deputy principal, to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
- 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;

- Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers, cleaners must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;
- 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;
- It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset;
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents;
- Incidents are generally best 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. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements;
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after 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 parents 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 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;
- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;
- It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and 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;

- 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. This can have a therapeutic effect;
- 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 2**;
- 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:
  1. Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
  2. Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
  3. Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable; and
  4. Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal;
- 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;
- 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.

7. St. Brigid's Primary School's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:

- follow-up meeting with Principal/ Deputy Principal
- access to school Pastoral Care Team
- access to school counselling services
- School Personal Development Programme
- "Friends for Life " (NEPS)

A programme of support for pupils who have been bullied is 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.

## **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 the Traveller community.

**10.** This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_ [date].

**11.** This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

**12.** This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, be otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

(Chairperson of Board of Management) (Principal)

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

Date of next review: September 2022

## **Appendix 1-Procedure for Investigation of Bullying**

**At least two adults at interviews-one asking the questions and one taking notes**

**Alleged victim and perpetrator will be interviewed separately**

**If a group is involved, interview members of the group individually and take notes.**

### **Step 1 Interview victim to confirm allegation**

- Reassure victim that they were right to report and that it is not their fault if the bully gets into trouble, that it is the bully's own responsibility.
- Try to get as much information, names, where it happened, witnesses, others involved etc.
- Don't ask leading questions- ask open questions...Is there anything else you want to tell me....?
- The note –taking should be in the child's own words as much as possible
- Read back what was written to the victim and ask him to sign it
- Ensure the safety of the victim until the bully has been spoken to

### **Step 2 Interview perpetrator**

- No need to tell source of allegation only that it has come to your attention and that you have an allegation/proof of a very serious bullying issue.
- An accusatory tone is not helpful.
- Ask questions to confirm what you know from the victim's complaint/letter
- If bully is inclined to deny the allegation, inform him of any witnesses.
- Inform perpetrator that his behaviour is in breach of school policy ie. He/she has broken the rules.
- Describe the emotional, physical, psychological pain of victim and ask him what he thinks he could do to make amends.
- Explain that he/she needs to apologise to the victim but also to promise to refrain from all kinds of bullying behaviour in the future as a re-offending could mean suspension or even expulsion. Read back what has been admitted to and ask him/her to sign it
- It is up to the school management team to decide the sanction ie.
- Should the bully have to apologise verbally or should he/she write a letter or both? Should the apology only be heard by the victim or should he have to read it aloud in front of his/her peers?
- Should other group members apologise?

Remind bully that if there are any acts of retribution or revenge against the victim because he reported the bullying, then there will be serious consequences and he may have to come before the Board of Management.

**Inform all parents of pupils involved that a serious bullying incident has occurred and that it will or has been dealt with in school.**



## Appendix 2- Template for recording bullying behaviour

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

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

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3. Source of bullying concern/report

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4. Location of incidents (tick relevant locations)

Pupil concerned	Teacher
Playground	Toilets
Other Pupil	Other
Classroom	School Bus
Parent	Other
Corridor	

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

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6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant behaviours)

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

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

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

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

9. Details of actions taken

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ (Relevant Teacher) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal \_\_\_\_\_