



# Anti-Bullying Policy

## 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. Paul'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 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.

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) in the first incidence, the class teacher, followed by consultation with the Principal and /or Deputy Principal, where deemed necessary.

5. The education and prevention strategies in use in our school are:

A. **Educational Strategies:** As with most things, prevention of bullying is better than trying to deal with its consequences. Awareness of bullying will be raised for the children by various means, including

- The S.P.H.E. Programme – lessons on Self Esteem; Interpersonal Skills; Conflict Resolution; Passive, Assertive and Aggressive Behaviour.
- Role Play – exploring situations where bullying can occur; what to do if you feel you are being bullied; what to do if you see other people being bullied.
- Fostering a Positive Atmosphere in the School – including respect for others, respect for human diversity, inclusive and respectful language and enhancing self-esteem in the children.

B. **Strategies for Children:** The following 10 point programme will be discussed at length with the children to ensure that they are fully aware of what constitutes bullying behaviour and what to do if it happens to them or to others. The document will be placed in prominent positions round the school and regularly referred to.

### **10 Things To Know About Bullying**

1. Bullying is **REPEATED** behaviour that is meant to make others feel upset in **any** way.
2. Hitting, pushing, tripping and kicking can be bullying.
3. Teasing, calling names, shouting at others, and making fun of others can be bullying.
4. Writing things about others, asking others to give you things or do things for you can be bullying.

5. Making others feel left out can be bullying.
6. If somebody bullies you it is **always** their fault. It is **never** your fault.
7. If you see somebody else being bullied and you do nothing then you are part of the bullying too.
8. If you are being bullied or if you see somebody being bullied you must **TELL** a teacher or your parents. You will **never** get into trouble for telling. If you tell, the bullying will **STOP**. If you do not tell, the bullying will **NOT** stop.
9. Sometimes you can be a bully, even if you don't mean to be. What you think is just a bit of fun can be very hurtful to another person.
10. School is a place where children should feel safe. Remember our golden rule –

**"Treat other people in the way you would like to be treated".**

6. Procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying are:

- A. Teachers will treat seriously all reported incidences of bullying behaviour. Pupils will be encouraged to bring such incidences to the attention of teachers.
- B. If the teacher is satisfied that observed or reported incidents can be classified as bullying, then a formal investigation will begin.
- C. A teacher will speak to all parties involved. If a group is involved members may be interviewed separately. The teacher will endeavour to discover
  - **What** happened
  - **When** did it happen; has something similar happened in the past; and how long have such incidences been going on.

- **Who** was involved, both in the latest incident and in any previous incidents.
  - **Why** is this behaviour taking place.
- D. If it is established that bullying did take place then the children are asked to
- Think about their behaviour and the effect it is having on the other person
  - Admit that their behaviour was wrong
  - Undertake not to behave in such a manner again
- E. The teacher involved will keep a written record of their investigation. It may also be appropriate to ask the children involved to write an account of the incidents.
- F. The situation between the children involved will be monitored to ensure that the bullying is not repeated. If the situation continues to give cause for concern then the following procedures will be followed.
- The parents of the child or children involved will be notified that their child's behaviour is a cause for concern. A meeting will be arranged between the parents and the teacher involved.
  - The parents will be asked to give an undertaking that their children's behaviour will improve immediately.
  - If the situation continues to give cause for concern then sanctions may be appropriate in accordance with the schools Code of Behaviour. (see page 8)
- G. At all stages the parents of the victim of bullying will be kept informed as to what has happened and what action has been taken. Practical action will be taken to assist the child to realise
- The bullying is **not** the fault of the victim

- Steps are being taken to end the bullying behaviour
- The child has a **right** to feel safe and secure in school

H. It is important to realise that bullying behaviour is a symptom of unhappiness or insecurity in the person doing the bullying. Teachers and parents should work in partnership to ensure that the person doing the bullying is treated as sympathetically as possible, while at the same time ensuring that limits must be set to the bullying behaviour.

## **Signs of Bullying**

It is important to realise that these signs do not necessarily mean that bullying is involved. For example, reluctance to come to school may often involve anxiety about separation from parents or home rather than anything happening at school.

However, if these signs are repeated or occur in combination then investigation is warranted in order to establish what is affecting the child.

### **Signs**

- Unwillingness to go to school
- Loss of enthusiasm and interest in school
- Deterioration in educational performance
- Unexplained changes in mood or behaviour – particularly before returning to school after weekends or holiday breaks.
- Visible signs of anxiety or distress – stammering, nightmares, difficulty sleeping, crying, not eating, bed-wetting, vomiting, withdrawing.
- Possessions damaged or missing, clothing damaged
- Requests for money
- Patterns of physical illnesses – headaches, stomach problems
- Unexplained bruising or cuts
- Reluctance or refusal to say what is causing distress

## **SANCTIONS**

(Excerpt from the schools Code of Behaviour)

The following strategies may be included as appropriate ways to show disapproval of unacceptable behaviour.

- Reasoning with the pupil
- Advice on how to behave
- Reprimand
- Temporary separation from peers, friends or others
- Loss of privileges
- Detention during a break
- Prescribing additional work for home or school
- Referral to Principal
- Communication with parents

Communication with parents will be verbal or by letter, depending on the circumstances. The parents concerned may be invited to come to the school to discuss their child's case.

Where there are repeated instances of misbehaviour, the Chairperson of the Board of Management may be informed and the parents shall be invited to meet with the Principal and the Chairperson and the class teacher or any combination of the above as appropriate. If the parents and, where appropriate, the pupil, do not give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future the pupil may be suspended for a temporary period. Suspension will be in accordance with the terms of Rule 130 (5) of the Rules for National Schools.

In the case of serious misbehaviour the Board has authorised the Chairperson and/or the Principal to sanction an immediate suspension pending discussing the matter with the parents.

Expulsion will be considered, where appropriate, in accordance with Rule 130(6)



## **Bullying by Adults**

In the case of **intra-staff bullying**, St. Paul's NS will adopt the procedures outlined in Section C (c2) of the INTO booklet: "Working Together: Procedures & Policies for Positive Staff Relations". A copy of this document is available for free download on the INTO website.

In the case of **Teacher-child bullying**, a complaint should in the first instance be raised with the teacher in question by the parent/guardian of the child if possible and then if necessary referred to the Principal. Where it has not been possible to agree a framework for resolution, the matter should be referred in writing by both parties to the Board of Management for investigation.

In the case of **Parent-Teacher bullying**, the Principal should be informed in the first instance and if deemed necessary the Board of Management should subsequently be informed in writing.

In the case of **Parents/Visitor to the school-child bullying**, the complaint should be referred in the first instance to the child's class teacher and subsequently to the Principal if unresolved.

In the case of **Principal- Parent/Child Bullying**, the matter should be raised with the Principal if possible or referred to the chairperson of the Board of Management.

## **7. Detailed Procedures and Schools Programme of support for working with those affected by bullying:**

- A. It is important to remember that children will always have differences of opinion and arguments. If these incidences take place sporadically or involve minor disagreements then there is generally little to worry about. Children should be taught the difference between temporary fallings-out and the serious, systematic and repeated aggressive behaviour which constitutes bullying.

- B. Also it should be realised that one of the main lessons children learn in school is how to get along with others. This includes dealing with people that you don't really get on with very well. Being in a class or a playground with a child who may annoy you or 'get on your nerves' teaches children how to compromise and how to deal with less-than-ideal situations. Not really liking another person does not make you a bully – equally, a person who does not really like you is not necessarily a bully.
- C. Bullying is defined at the beginning of the Schools Policy Statement as ***"unwanted, negative and repeated verbal, psychological or physical behaviour conducted by an individual or a group against others"***
- D. Bullied children find it difficult to talk about their experiences because of several factors including
- A fear of reprisals
  - Shame or embarrassment
  - An unwillingness to let other people know
  - The risk of losing the respect of peers or their families
  - A lack of confidence in adults ability to sort out things
  - A belief that 'telling tales' is wrong
- E. The signs which may show that your child is being bullied are outlined in the Policy Document.
- F. If you feel that your child may have been the victim of bullying at school, you **must** tell the teachers. Often children will plead with their parents to say nothing for fear of making matters worse. The child can be reassured that as much confidentiality as possible will be maintained. Bullying of its very nature is a secret activity, and schools can be very busy places. The teachers will not know unless they are told.
- G. Teaching a child to respond to bullying behaviour by 'fighting back' or 'ignore them and they will stop' will not be effective in solving the problem – in fact the situation will probably worsen.

- H. The procedures for dealing with incidences of bullying behaviour are outlined in the Policy Document.
- I. Most parents are worried from time-to-time about their child being bullied but what if your child is the one accused of being the bully. Don't dismiss the accusation. Teachers will not make it lightly or without evidence.
- J Children may become bullies for different reasons.
- They may feel insecure and inadequate
  - They may be victims of bullying themselves
  - They may be very competitive and see other children as either inferior or as a threat to their position
  - They may not realise that their actions are hurtful to the other person
  - They may be responding to something else in their lives – a new baby, an illness or death in the family, a change in their home life, etc.
- K. It is imperative that the bullying behaviour stops. However, punishing a child who bullies will not work on its own. Talk to your child to try and find out why they are behaving in this way. Try to get them to understand how the victim feels. Children who bully often suffer from poor self-esteem. Tell them you love them, but their behaviour is unacceptable. Try to get them to accept that their behaviour was wrong and to promise it will stop. Make sure you keep monitoring the situation.
- L. It is very important that the parents and the school work together to deal with situations involving bullying behaviour.

## **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 9/10/2023

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.

Our focus in St Paul's N.S. for SSE this year is Mental health and Wellbeing in our school. This will link with our anti bullying policy which may be amended throughout the year as we work through the SEE process.

Signed: Susan Pamy  
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: De-Ann  
Principal

Date: 9/10/23 Date of next review: September 2024



## **Appendix 2 Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate**

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.

Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas, changing rooms, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision.

Hot times again tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when pupils are in the playground/school yard or moving classrooms.

Support the establishment and work of student councils.



# **Appendix 4 Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation**

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation. The following checklist must be used for this purpose. The checklist is an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. In order to complete the checklist, an examination and review involving both quantitative and qualitative analysis, as appropriate across the various elements of the implementation of the school's anti-bullying policy will be required.

	Yes /No
Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools</i> ?	Yes
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	Yes
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	Yes
Is the Board satisfied that school staff are sufficiently familiar with the policy and procedures to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy and procedures in their day to day work?	Yes
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	Yes
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	Yes
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	Yes
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	Yes
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	Yes
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	Yes
Has the Board discussed how well the school is handling all reports of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and not therefore included in the Principal's periodic report to the Board?	Yes
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	No
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	No
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	No
Has the data available from cases reported to the Principal (by the bullying recording template) been analysed to identify any issues, trends or patterns in bullying behaviour?	No
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	No
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	N/A

Signed Susan Parry  
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date 9/10/23

Signed: A. M. J.  
Principal

Date 9/10/23

**Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the anti-bullying policy**

To: School Community

The Board of Management of St Paul's N.S. wishes to inform you that:

- The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of 9-10-23 [date].
- This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in **Appendix 4** of the Department's *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Signed Susan Pamy  
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date 9-10-23

Signed A - M  
Principal

Date 9-10-23