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Registered Charity Number : 20116637

## Anti-Bullying Policy

### Introduction

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, and the *Code of Behaviour Guidelines* published by the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB) in 2008, the Board of Management of St. Catherine'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 Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* ("Procedures") which were published by the Department of Education and Skills in September 2013. The *Procedures* are available at <https://www.cuh.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Anti-Bullying-Procedures-for-Primary-and-Post-Primary-Schools-Appendix.pdf> and are considered to form an Appendix to this Policy.

### Key Principles

2. The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact 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. See Appendix 2.
  - 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.

### Definition of Bullying

3. In accordance with the *Procedures*, 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.

Appendix 2 gives a list of specific examples of bullying behaviour. This list is not exhaustive.

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 content 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 *Procedures*. <https://www.cuh.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Anti-Bullying-Procedures-for-Primary-and-Post-Primary-Schools-Appendix.pdf>

### **Procedures & Protocols**

4. The *relevant* teachers (see Section 6.8 of the *Procedures*) for investigating and dealing with any allegation of bullying are as follows:
  - The class teacher(s) of any of the children involved;
  - The Principal or Deputy Principal.
  - The SET (Special Education Teacher) of the children involved, if they attend for additional support, will be consulted and informed of any allegations. All staff, both teachers and SNSs, will also be informed so that they can monitor the children in question in the playground, on corridors, when on supervision duties.
5. A school wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community is central to our code of Behaviour. 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 *Procedures*);
  - 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.

- Staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develop an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it – prevention and intervention.
- An anti-bullying week once every academic year, covering all forms of bullying in an age-appropriate way.
- A special emphasis will be placed on training “bystander” children to intervene in bullying or potential bullying situations, in an appropriate way.
- The Stay Safe programme will be taught every year to all classes.
- A workshop for senior classes on all types of bullying, including cyber-bullying, every year.
- A regular circle time in all classes (at least once a month) to enable children to share worries, develop empathy and practice social skills.
- Resources such as theatre group workshops will be used where appropriate.
- Storybooks encouraging respect for an acceptance of a variety of family structures and situations (e.g. same sex parents, single parents, shared custody, adopted/foster children, children in care, etc.) will be available in the class libraries and will be used by teachers when teaching on the theme of family.
- Children's use of ICT will be monitored very closely. No child will be permitted to access social media individually while at school.
- Mobile phones and/or any Wi-Fi enabled devices may be brought to school but must be handed to the class teacher upon arrival. The class teacher will lock these away securely for the duration of the school day. The same rules apply to school tours and field trip situations.
- A clear Tell-An-Adult policy regularly reinforced at school assemblies and in the classroom.
- Anti-bullying posters will be permanently on display.
- Children are organised into house-teams led by 6<sup>th</sup> class pupils, so that all children have access to senior pupils who can act as “big brothers/sisters”.
- A locked post-box will be provided for children to encourage them to let staff know about any problems, anonymously or otherwise.
- Children's birthday parties and other social occasions should be organised without involving the school in any way. Teachers and other staff will not hand out invitations; in addition, children should not hand out invitations during school time. The Parents Association will be requested to advise parents of same.
- The school's Anti-Bullying policy is included in the pack sent given to all new parents at the beginning of each academic year.

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 (See Section 6.8 of the *Procedures*);

***The primary aim 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.***

#### **Reporting bullying behaviour**

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may report a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.
- All reports will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff must report any 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 their 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, incidents should be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- Where possible 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 happened?
  - What were you thinking at the time?
  - Who has been affected?
  - In what way?
  - What needs to be done to make things right?

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 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)
- 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 school policy). The school should give parent(s)/guardian(s) an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the 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 parent(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.
- 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.
  - 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**

All recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner.

The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

- While all reports, 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.

### **Formal Stage 1-determination that bullying has occurred**

- If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must keep appropriate written records which will assist their efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

### **Formal Stage 2**

The relevant teacher must use the recording template at **Appendix 3** to record the bullying behaviour in cases where they considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after they have determined that bullying behaviour occurred.

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. It should also be noted that the timeline for recording bullying behaviour in the recording template at Appendix 3 does not in any way preclude the relevant teacher from consulting the Principal or Deputy Principal at an earlier stage in relation to a case. Notes / Records will be stored in accordance with the School's Data Protection Policy.

The parents of both the child(ren) who has/have been bullied and the child(ren) who have engaged in bullying behaviour may be advised that counselling may be helpful to their children, and a list of counselling agencies and, in such circumstances, child psychologists/therapists will be provided.

In serious cases of bullying, and where school interventions have not proved effective, Tusla will be informed of the incidents and of the ongoing concerns of the school with regard to the child(ren) involved.

If the school authorities become aware of an incident of cyber-bullying which occurs outside school hours but involves the bullying of a child or children in our school by another pupil or pupils, this will be treated as though it had occurred in school-time. Parents will be informed, and appropriate sanctions will be imposed if warranted. Children who persist in cyber-bullying and whose parents do not take steps to deal with the issue, may be excluded from the school permanently as we regard this as very serious behaviour.

**7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows (see Section 6.8 of the *Procedures*);**

- Children will be offered the opportunity to talk through what happened with a staff member they trust. They will be told that at any time in the future they can ask to speak to this adult, and s/he will make time for them.
- Children whose victimisation is perceived to have happened because their social skills are immature will be given the opportunity to develop those social skills in a small group. This will be facilitated by the SEN team in conjunction with the class teacher.
- The parents of children who have been bullied will be advised that counselling is sometimes necessary. They should monitor their children carefully for signs of anxiety, withdrawal, depression etc., and should seek professional help if necessary.
- The parents of children who have been found to have engaged in bullying should also be advised of the possible need for counselling, especially if the bullying was serious and if the child was the ringleader, and/or the child is displaying other anti-social behaviours;
- A list of child psychologists and therapists will be maintained at the school for parents to consult.
- If necessary, the school will seek professional guidance and support from the NEPS psychologist assigned to the school and/or the Anti-Bullying Unit in TCD.

**8. Supervision & 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 as 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 in equality legislation i.e., gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller Community.

**10. Adoption & Review**

- This Policy was adopted by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_ date
- This Policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website, is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request, and has been provided to the Parents Association. A copy of this *Policy* will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.
- This Policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website, be otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request 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.

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_  
CHAIRPERSON OF BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

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

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_  
PRINCIPAL

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

Date of next review: \_\_\_\_\_

## **APPENDIX 1**

*Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools, September 2013*

<https://www.cuh.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Anti-Bullying-Procedures-for-Primary-and-Post-Primary-Schools-Appendix.pdf>

## **Appendix 2 – Examples of Bullying Behaviour**

Bullying (Deliberate, Repeated, Hurtful Behaviour) can take a number of forms. These may include any of the following (this list is not exhaustive):

- **Repeated aggressive behaviour/attitude/body language, for example:**
  - Shouting and uncontrolled anger
  - Personal insults
  - Verbal abuse
  - Offensive language directed at an individual
  - Continually shouting or dismissing others
  - Public verbal attacks/criticism
  - Domineering behaviour
  - Open aggression
  - Offensive gestures and unwanted physical contact
- **Intimidation, either physical, psychological or emotional, for example:**
  - Treating in a dictatorial manner
  - Ridicule
  - Persistent slugging
  - Deliberate staring with the intent to discomfort
  - Persistent rudeness in behaviour and attitude toward a particular individual
  - Asking inappropriate questions/making inappropriate comments re. personal life/family
  - Asking inappropriate questions/making inappropriate comments re. social life or schoolwork
- **Interference with property, for example:**
  - Stealing/damaging books or equipment
  - Stealing/damaging clothing or other property
  - Demanding money with menaces
  - Persistently moving, hiding or interfering with property
  - Marking/defacing property
- **Undermining/Public or Private Humiliation, for example:**
  - Condescending tone
  - Deliberately withholding significant information and resources
  - Writing of anonymous notes
  - Malicious, disparaging or demeaning comments
  - Malicious tricks/derogatory jokes
  - Knowingly spreading rumours
  - Belittling others' efforts, their enthusiasm or their new ideas
  - Derogatory or offensive nicknames (name-calling)
  - Using electronic or other media for any of the above (cyber bullying)
  - Disrespectfully mimicking a particular individual in his/her absence
  - Deliberately refusing to address issues focusing instead on the person
- **Ostracising or isolating, for example:**
  - Deliberately marginalising an individual
  - Deliberately preventing a person from joining a group
  - Deliberately preventing from joining in an activity, schoolwork-related or recreational
  - Blaming a pupil for things s/he did not do

### **APPENDIX 3 : 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 round 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 4**

Template for recording Bullying Behaviour, (comprising Appendix 3 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools*, September 2013).

**Name of pupil being bullied and class group**

**1. Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Class:** \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Name(s) and classes of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour**

**3 .Source of bullying concerns report (tick relevant box(es))**

- Pupil concerned
- Other Pupil
- Parent
- Teacher
- Other

**4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))**

- Playgroup
- Classroom
- Corridor
- Toilets
- School bus
- Other

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

**6.Type of bullying behaviour (tick relevant box(es))**

- Physical aggression
  - Damage to property
  - Isolation/Exclusion
  - Name Calling

- Cyber-bullying
  - Intimidation
  - Malicious Gossip
  - Other - specify

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

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

**8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and it's impact:**

**9. Details of Actions taken:**

**SIGNED:** \_\_\_\_\_ **(Relevant Teacher)** **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

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

Note: The categories listed in the tables 3, 4 and 6 are suggested and schools may add to or amend these to suit their own circumstances