



**St. Patrick's Girls' National School
Ringsend.**

**Anti-Bullying Policy
Reviewed December 2019
Updated 11th October 2021**

**to be reviewed annually every October
from October 2022**

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1. Introduction

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools (NEWB 2008) and Anti Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (September 2013), the Board of Management of St Patrick's Girls' National School has adopted, as required by the Department of Education and Skills, the following procedures within the framework for the school's overall Code of Behaviour.

They should be read in conjunction with the school's Mission Statement and the following policy documents from St Patrick's GNS:

- Safeguarding Statement
- Risk Assessment
- Code of Behaviour
- Dignity in the Workplace
- SPHE Policy and 2 year rolling plan
- RSE
- Mobile Phone Policy
- Internet Acceptable Use Policy

Circular 0032/2021 (pages 5 and 6 – section 2.2.1) details Inspectorate involvement with schools re anti bullying procedures. ([file:///C:/Users/admin/Downloads/137812_ecdef02b-c328-48d7-83d7-ec8b610ce504%20\(2\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/admin/Downloads/137812_ecdef02b-c328-48d7-83d7-ec8b610ce504%20(2).pdf)) This circular states “Bullying behaviour, by its very nature, undermines and dilutes the quality of education. Research shows that bullying can have short-term and long-term effects on the physical and mental well-being of pupils, on engagement with school, on self confidence and on the ability to pursue ambitions and interests.

The Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-primary Schools, (2013) give direction and guidance to school authorities and school personnel in preventing and addressing school-based bullying behavior, and in dealing with any negative impact within school of bullying behaviour that occurs elsewhere.” This quote is also relevant to our SSE theme of Wellbeing for the school year 2021 – 2022.

2. Key Principles of Bullying:

The Board of Management and staff of St Patrick's GNS 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; The school promotes habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the interdependence of people in groups and communities. The school promotes qualities of social responsibility, tolerance
- Effective leadership
- A school wide approach to bullying
- A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact
- Our school ethos promotes an atmosphere of friendship, tolerance, respect and cooperation.
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies, including awareness raising measures, that build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils as well as explicitly addresses the issues of cyber bullying.
- The school promotes the equality of pupils and staff.
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils.
- Consistent investigating and recording then follow up of bullying behaviour
- Ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of our anti bullying policy.

The school acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment and has the capacity to review this policy and make changes in response to pupils' needs.

The school recognizes the need to work in partnership with and keep parents informed, on procedures to improve relationships on a school-wide basis and recognises the role of parents in equipping the pupil with a range of life-skills.

3. Definition of Bullying

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 AntiBullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013) (https://www.pdst.ie/sites/default/files/cl0045_2013_1.pdf)

4. Procedures

A pupil, staff member, parent/guardian may bring a bullying concern to any teacher in the school. It is the responsibility of the person to whom the report is made to pass on the relevant information to the appropriate member of staff.

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 will have responsibility for investigating and dealing with first incidents of potential bullying behaviour.

First Report

Any person in the school community, a pupil, staff member, and parent/guardian may report an incident of serious negative behaviour towards another individual. The class teacher will usually deal with the complaint initially. In investigating and dealing with negative behaviour, the teacher will exercise his/ her professional judgement to determine whether potential bullying has occurred and how best the situation can be resolved. If in investigating the incident, previous unreported incidents are referred to, the staff member should take note and record this information, but treat this report as the first incident formally noted.

Please see Appendix 3, template which will be used for recording incidents of bullying behaviour.

Teachers will take a calm, problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of potential bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents/guardians.

In any incident of bullying, the teacher will speak to all the pupils involved, in an attempt to get all sides of the story. All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard for all the pupils concerned. It may also be helpful to ask those involved to write down an account of the incident. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide useful information in this way. **A written record of the incident will be kept (see Appendix 3)**

As bullying is defined as behaviour that is 'systematic and ongoing' a first incident of aggressive behaviour is not viewed as bullying. It becomes bullying when there are subsequent incidents. Negative behaviour will be dealt with in accordance with the school's code of behaviour (including informing parents). If the teacher concludes that this negative type of behaviour could lead to bullying, the child/children involved will be made aware of this and the consequences of similar behaviours reoccurring (as outlined in the following sections).

Second Incident

This would usually be referred to the Principal/Deputy Principal. A similar approach to that identified above will be used to investigate the incident. An incident report will be kept **(see Appendix 3)**

Parents of the children involved will be contacted by DP or P, informing them of the incident. Records will be kept of parent/teacher interactions.

Third and Subsequent Incidents

The Principal or Deputy Principal will deal with further incidents. Incident reports will be written and filed. **(see Appendix 3)** Parents of child(ren) involved in bullying behaviour will be informed. Records of parent conferences will be kept.

If and when it is deemed necessary, outside agencies may become involved. At every stage of the process, parents and pupils are expected and required to cooperate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved. Any lack of co-operation will be referred to the Board of Management.

The primary aim for the relevant teacher in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues, or in dealing with any bullying, and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved rather than to apportion blame.

The Principal

The Principal, on behalf of the Board of Management will also make appropriate arrangements to ensure that temporary and substitute staff have access to and awareness of the school's Code of Behaviour and AntiBullying policy. Hard copies of these policies will be in each classroom in the blue policy file.

The Board of Management

The Board of Management will ensure that members of school staff have sufficient familiarity with the school's anti-bullying policy to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy, when required.

However, all members of the school community have a role to play in the prevention of bullying.

Responsibilities of School Staff

- To implement prevention and intervention strategies which build and maintain a safe learning environment for the whole school community.
- To empower students to deal with conflict in constructive ways.
- To take all reports of bullying seriously and to report them to the Principal, if warranted.
- To document any serious bullying incidents using the Bullying Incident Report Form. **(Appendix 3)**

Responsibilities of Pupils

- To show consideration, respect and support towards others.
- To be able to identify bullying behaviour.
- To not bully others.
- To tell if they are being bullied or if they see someone else being bullied.
- To engage in responsible reporting when witnessing or experiencing bullying behaviour.
- To develop a sense of empathy for targeted members of the school community and as a result take safe and sensible action as a bystander.

Responsibilities of Parents

- To support the school in the implementation of the policy.
- To watch out for signs that their child may be being bullied.
- To speak to the class teacher if their child is being bullied or they suspect that this is happening.
- To speak to the class teachers as soon as they are aware that issues are arising which are affecting their child.
- To instruct their children to tell if they are being bullied or if they have seen other pupils being bullied.
- To notify the school if they think that their child is displaying bullying behaviour and to work with the school in addressing this problem. They should not defer letting the school know of any issue, in the hope that the problem will go away.

- To ensure that if their children are online that they are using social media in a safe and responsible manner; parental supervision is very important in this area as there are risks associated with internet/website access.
- Never to directly approach a student, or the parent of a student, at the school to intervene in behavioural issues.

5. **Reporting**

All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. In this 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 the SNAs, caretaker and cleaners are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

Any 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 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 nonaggressive manner.

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 to discuss ways in which they can reinforce 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 her how she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made

to try to get her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.

6. Prevention Strategies

The education and prevention strategies 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):

Proactive Strategies towards prevention of Bullying:

Bullying behaviour affects not only those immediately involved. It can affect everyone in the classroom, in the school and, ultimately, in the wider community. The school, as appropriate, will seek to involve and receive support from the other partners in community education, i.e. those members of the wider community who come directly in daily contact with pupils. This could include the wider parent body, the Parents Association, traffic wardens, ancillary staff, local shopkeepers and local library staff. In certain cases, however, it may be necessary for the school to seek the assistance of other local persons and formal agencies such as NEPS, HSE, social workers, community workers, Gardaí etc.

Staff are constantly vigilant of children's behaviour. Positive behaviour is modelled, recognised and affirmed throughout the school. Children are explicitly taught what respectful language and respectful behavior looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school. There is regular input at class level on the promotion of positive behaviour.

Children can be rewarded on Friday afternoon with 'Golden time'.

Records are kept of children's behaviour. Where a child is having difficulty with his/her behaviour he/she is given the necessary support.

- The school's anti-bullying code will be discussed with the pupils
- Regular Social, Personal, Health Education lessons incorporating the following programmes; Walk Tall, Relationships and Sexuality Education, Stay Safe, Weaving Wellbeing. Teachers can influence attitudes to bullying behaviour in a positive manner through these programme as well as present opportunities to discuss positive friendships.
- The under-lying message of 'Respect for all', will be referred to regularly
- Circle-time may be used as an opportunity for children from all classes to bring to light, any instances of un-acceptable behaviour, known to them

- Model respectful behavior to all members of the school community at all times
- Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behavior looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school
- Notice and acknowledge pupils being good and displaying respectful behavior
- Pupil of the Week every Friday. Teachers choose pupils to receive a certificate and a small prize.
- Constantly tackle any discriminatory or derogatory language in the school
- Explicitly teach the children about appropriate use of social media
- Positively encourage pupils to comply with school rules on mobile phones and the use of the internet.
- Actively involve parents and Parents' Association in the life of the school
- All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behavior
- Ensure that there is adequate supervision in the playground/yard
- Consistent recording and treatment of bullying
- Immediate affirmation of children who report incidents of bullying which they have witnessed
- Pupils made aware that the consequences of bullying behavior are always bad, even if this is not obvious at the time
- Creating a culture of "telling"; Teachers should repeatedly reinforce the message that if anyone is the victim of bullying behaviour, they should not retaliate in any way, but they should tell an adult. Victims should be reassured that if they tell, something will be done about the bullying in a safe manner and all reported incidents will be dealt with.
- Class lessons to be provided to enable pupils "how to tell" and the difference between "telling tales" and "reporting" Bystanders can be the key to resolving bullying and if anyone witnesses bullying behaviour, they should always tell a teacher. This is not telling tales but a means of protecting victims.
- In the school year 2021 – 2022 we will set up a student Council as well as begin work on our Amber Flag.
- Adequate supervision in the school yard. (school year 2021 – 2022 this will be 1 teacher and either 3 or 4 SNAs)
- Endeavor to provide pupils with opportunities to develop a positive sense of selfworth

- Across the Curriculum, there is space within the teaching of all subjects to foster an attitude of respect for all: to promote the value of diversity; to address prejudice and stereotyping and to highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- The school's approach to tackling and preventing bullying takes account of the needs of pupils with ASN, joins up with other relevant school policies and supports and tries to ensure that all the services that provide for such pupils, work together.

7. Procedures for Recording bullying behaviour

All records must be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour is for relevant member of staff to complete Appendix 3 reporting template and give this to the principal as well as any relevant details to be added to each individual's Log of Actions on our Aladdin computer system.

Bullying behaviour must always also be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable. (see template in Appendix 3)

8. Supports for pupils affected by bullying

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows (see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools) :

A programme of support will be put in place for children who have been bullied as well as for pupils who bully, as needs arise. This will be facilitated by the principal and may include themes such as social skills, communication, body language, respect and tolerance, friendship, feelings and decision making. She will consult, as necessary, with relevant parties e.g. principal, support team, parents, child, before putting any programme in place.

Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling or the school may need to engage external professional support to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others. 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. Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour will be encouraged to discuss what they observed with their respective teachers.

The primary aim is to enhance the self-worth of pupils involved.

Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour are encouraged to tell staff and are assured that there will be no negative consequences for reporting such incidents. As previously stated, all incidents reported, no matter how trivial, will be investigated and outcomes recorded.

9. 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.

10. 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.

11. Circular 045/2013 and Circular 0032/2021

As per these circulars, the school will ensure;

- Termly reporting by the principal to the Board of Management on anti bullying matters as detailed in Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013).
- That the Board of Management hold an annual review, every October, of the school's Anti Bullying Policy and their implementation.
- Communication of the Anti Bullying Policy and its review to all members of the school community.

- Recording of incidents of bullying behaviour in accordance with the Anti bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2013.

12. Ratification

This policy was reviewed by St Patrick's GNS Board of Management on 17/11/2021.

13. Review

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management in October every year.

14. Evaluation and Success Criteria

The evaluation of the policy will happen on both an informal (through teacher observation) and formal basis (use of surveys and questionnaires).

Success Criteria:

- Positive feedback from teachers, parents and pupils
- Well-being and happiness of the whole school community in the light of incidents of bullying behaviour encountered and fewer problems in the yard.
- Increase in numbers of children reporting

Ratified

This policy was ratified by St Patrick's Girls' National School on 17th November 2021.

The Very Rev Ivan Tonge – Chairperson of the Board of Management

17/11/2021

Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website, 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 of Education and Skills.

APPENDIX 1 - Checklist for review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation

REVIEW DATE: October 2022 then annually

The following checklist must be used for reviewing the policy. 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.

1. Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools?
2. Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?
3. Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?
4. 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?
5. Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?
6. Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?
7. Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?
8. Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?

9. Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?

10. Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?

11. 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?

12. Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?

13. Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?

14. Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?

15. 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?

16. Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?

17. Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?

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.

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 ASN.

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 Parent Teachers' 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 are 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 3: Template for recording bullying behaviour

<u>Name of pupil being bullied and class</u>	
<u>Names and classes of other pupils involved</u>	
<u>The source of the concern or report (please choose)</u> Name _____	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pupil being herself - Another pupil - Parent - Teacher - Sna - Other member of staff – please specify - School visitor
<u>Location of incident (please choose)</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Playground</u> - <u>Classroom</u> - <u>PE hall</u> - <u>Corridor</u> - <u>Toilet</u> - <u>Support rooms</u> - <u>School outing</u> - <u>Other – please specify</u>
<u>Type of bullying behaviour (please choose)</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Physical aggression</u> - <u>Cyber bullying</u> - <u>Damage to property</u> - <u>Intimidation</u> - <u>Isolation/exclusion</u> - <u>Malicious gossip</u> - <u>Name Calling</u> - <u>Extortion</u> - <u>Other – please specify</u>
<u>If the behaviour/bullying is regarded as identity based then indicate the relevant category.</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Homophobic</u> - <u>Diability or ASN related</u>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <u>Racist</u> - <u>Membership of Traveller Community</u> - <u>Other (please specify)</u>
<p><u>Brief description of bullying behaviour and its impact.</u></p>	
<p><u>Details of actions taken</u></p>	
<p>Signed by Relevant teacher</p> <p>Date</p>	
<p>Date submitted to Principal or Deputy Principal</p> <p>Signed Principal or Deputy Principal</p>	