



St. Patrick's NS Strangsmills

Anti-Bullying policy

Revised: 2023

www.strangsmillsns.ie
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Introduction

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. Patrick's NS Strangsmills 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. [Ref: Circular 045/2013]
2. This policy was drawn up giving due care and attention to the Anti Bullying Procedures as published by DES. In the formulation and review of this policy we collaborated with the staff, Board of Management and Parents Association in St. Patrick's NS. While this policy is specific to St. Patrick's NS, attention was particularly paid to the mandatory areas within the document.
3. 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) 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;
 - (b) Effective leadership
 - (c) A school-wide approach
 - (d) A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact
 - (e) Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that-
 - build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
 - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying;
 - (f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils
 - (g) Supports for staff

- (h) Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
- (i) On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

4. 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*.

Examples of bullying behaviours - this list is not exhaustive

<p>General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying • Physical aggression • Damage to property • Name calling • Negative comments • Slagging • The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating/embarrassing/offending another person • Offensive graffiti • Extortion • Intimidation • Insulting or offensive gestures • The “look” • Invasion of personal space • Isolation/exclusion • A combination of any of the types listed.
<p>Cyber</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denigration: Spreading rumours, lies or gossip to hurt a person’s reputation • Harassment: Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual • Impersonation: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person’s name • Flaming: Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight • Trickery: Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online • Outing: Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images, without consent • Exclusion: Purposefully excluding someone from an online group • Cyber stalking: Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a

	<p>person considerable fear for his/her safety</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Silent telephone/mobile phone call • Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls • Abusive text messages via any electronic device or application • Abusive email • Abusive, unwelcome/unwarranted communication on social networks e.g. TikToc/BeReal/You Tube etc or on games consoles • Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures • Abusive posts on any form of communication technology
<p>Identity Based Behaviours</p> <p>Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).</p>	
<p>Homophobic and Transgender</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spreading rumours about a person’s sexual orientation • Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation • Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian...used in a derogatory manner • Physical intimidation or attacks • Threats
<p>Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background • Exclusion on the basis of any of the above
<p>Relational</p>	<p>This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malicious gossip • Isolation & exclusion • Ignoring • Excluding from the group • Taking someone’s friends away

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Bitching” • Spreading rumours • Breaking confidence • Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear • The “look” • Use of terminology such as ‘nerd’ in a derogatory way
Sexual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching • Harassment
Special Educational Needs, Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name calling • Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs • Taking advantage of some pupils’ vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying • Taking advantage of some pupils’ vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues. • Mimicking a person’s disability • Setting others up for ridicule

The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows:

The class teacher is the first point of contact. If a parent or child approaches a teacher other than the class teacher they will be directed to the class teacher in the first instance. The relevant special education teachers will also be involved with her/his pupils. Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

Education and prevention strategies

School-wide approach

- A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community. The code of behaviour and anti-bullying policy will be mentioned at whole school level in the first assembly of each school year. A playground motto was introduced ‘kind hands, kind feet, kind words’.
- The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.

- Positive behaviour week is implemented in September of each school year and programmes such as the SALT programme, Fuse programme, SPHE programmes are used across the school
- 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 as deemed necessary
- Professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teacher(s) as deemed necessary including Zippy's friends, Friends for life, Lust for Life etc
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community as deemed necessary
- 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.
- Involvement of the pupils in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. buddy system, playground leaders, class and school student council and other student support activities that can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school-to be displayed publicly in classrooms and in common areas of the school 'STOP – ASK – LISTEN - TALK'
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parent(s)/guardian(s) are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school.
- The implementation of regular whole school awareness measures e.g. a dedicated notice board in the classrooms on the promotion of friendship during friendship week, bullying prevention event, occasional 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.

- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.:
 - Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
 - Hand note up with homework.
 - Message/worry box
 - Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
 - Administer a questionnaire once a year to all pupils as part of stay safe- where appropriate from second class upwards
 - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- We have identified clear protocols to encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach St Patrick's NS if they suspect that their child is being bullied.
- An Acceptable Use Policy has been developed in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored.
- The listing of supports currently being used in the school and the identification of other supports available to the school e.g. webwise, the Gardaí, Barnardos etc

Implementation of curriculum

- The full implementation of the SPHE curricula and the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes, e.g. Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme
- School wide delivery of age appropriate cyber-bullying programmes
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes at primary level. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardai, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying
- The school will specifically consider the individual needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.
- The school will refer to the advice in "Sexual Orientation advice for schools" (RSE Primary)

Links to other policies

- Links to school policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to bullying, e.g. Code of Behaviour, Child Protection policy, Supervision of pupils, Acceptable Use policies etc. are made available through the school website. www.strangsmillsns.ie

5. 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

Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

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);

The school's procedures must be consistent with the following approach.

Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s)) understand this approach from the outset.

Procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying:

1. Calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.
2. Incidents best investigated inside/outside the classroom situation.
3. Teacher will speak separately to the pupils involved when necessary.
4. Answers will be sought to questions of What, Where, When, Who and Why.
5. Members of a group will be met individually and as a group
6. All staff will need to be informed of incidents of bullying so that the situation can be monitored.

Incidents of bullying will be dealt with on a staged basis.

Stage 1

Unless the incident is of a very serious nature, it will be dealt with by the class teacher who will talk to the children involved. Teachers respect the need to support the esteem of each party involved in an incident. When a teacher becomes aware that a child is regularly involved in incidents he/she will start a record of such incidents. The purpose of this record is:

- To aid memory by recording details of the incident.
- For clarity in assessment of the situation
- For planning and intervention

When a teacher starts a record of incidences, parents/guardians will be notified informally. Only facts will be recorded. It is explained to the alleged bully how hurtful their behaviour is and attempts are made to encourage them to empathise with the alleged victim.

Should the action taken at this stage prove not to have resolved the issue, the staff will proceed to stage 2.

Stage 2

The class teacher will arrange to meet with the parents of the child who is seen to be bullying and separately with the parents of the victim of bullying. The children themselves may be required to attend part or all of these meetings. The child should be able to see that parents and school are working together in his/her interest, so the co-operation of the parents is essential. Initially a review of the reports will be carried out on a weekly basis, in a meeting with the teacher, parents and child. If progress is being made, longer intervals between meetings may be decided upon by the class teacher. The child who is the victim of the bullying will also meet with the teacher and his/her parents. The aims of such a meeting will be to address emotional needs and devise strategies for the child to deal with the bullying. This may involve reinforcing programmes being covered in class or other strategies. If it is deemed necessary the Principal will attend these meetings.

Stage 3

It is a duty of the school to provide a safe environment for all the children. Should the above interventions fail and the bullying continue, a programme of appropriate sanctions may be implemented by the Principal in consultation with the parents and the Board of Management. Sanctions implemented aim to encourage positive behaviour and support the esteem of the child. These sanctions may include a period of suspension (up to 3 days) during which there will be ongoing consultation with the parents/guardians to decide on appropriate action to be taken in the best interests of the child. Suspension for any period of time will be reported in writing by the Principal to the Chair of the Board of Management in line with the Code of Behaviour.

Recording of incidents:

All incidents will be logged by class teacher on Aladdin and incidents which have not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days will be recorded by the class teacher on the recording template as in Appendix 3 (Anti bullying Procedures for Primary and Post -Primary Schools). This template will be completed in full and a copy given to the Deputy Principal/Principal. At least once every school term the Principal will provide a report to the BOM setting out the overall number of bullying cases reported by means of this template and confirmation that all cases are being dealt with in accordance with procedure.

Follow up and recording

- Where a parent(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in

accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.

- In the event that a parent(s)/guardian(s) has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Recording of bullying behaviour

It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

Informal- pre-determination that bullying has occurred

- All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher who will keep his/her own informal records.

Formal Stage 1-determination that bullying has occurred

- If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher will
 - a) keep appropriate written records on Aladdin which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
 - b) inform the principal of all incidents being investigated.
- All records retained by the relevant teacher will be kept in a secure place.

Formal Stage 2-Appendix 3 (From DES Procedures)

The relevant teacher must use the recording template at **Appendix 3** to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

- a) in cases where he/she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred; and
- b) where the school has decided as part of its anti-bullying policy that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

When the recording template is used, it will be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal. These records will be kept in a safe place and will be accessed only

by the relevant teacher and the Principal and Deputy Principal.

Established intervention strategies

- Teacher interviews with all pupils
- Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process
- Working with parent(s)/guardian(s) to support school interventions
- No Blame Approach
- Circle Time
- Restorative approach

6. St Patrick's NS programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:

- All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying, in consultation with their parents, to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience e.g.
 - Buddy system
 - Informal in-class Student Support group
 - Group work such as circle time
 - Friendship/wellbeing week
 - Programmes such as 'Friends for Life', Zippy's friend's, Lust for Life
 - Continuum of support – classroom support, school support (as per Continuum :Behavioural, Emotional and Social difficulties- NEPS)
- Victims are reassured from the outset that they are not to blame.
- Children engaged in bullying behaviour may need to learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others. Empathy awareness needs to be developed.
- Clinical referral and assessment may be necessary.
- In certain cases too it may be necessary to invite assistance from formal agencies such as Gardaí, (J.L.O) HSE, Local Youth Groups etc.
- The school will constantly remind parents of the dangers of "cyber- bullying" as can happen with the use of social networking sites and mobile phones. We also direct their attention to

the school's internet Acceptable Use Policy (AUP).

- The school cannot be responsible for disagreements between pupils that happen outside the school grounds but will make reasonable efforts to cooperate with parents in assisting them to resolve the issues.
- A variety of programmes will be implemented when working with victims and bullies.
- If pupils require counselling or further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.
- Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

8. Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils

The Board of Management of St Patrick's NS 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.

St Patrick's NS Supervision and Monitoring Policy deals effectively with the supervision and monitoring of pupils

- We have identified areas that may cause potential problems. In identifying same we have taken steps to ensure these problems are minimised / eliminated. Each class group plays in a specific area of the school yard for break time.
- In relation to Acceptable Use Policy in the school the following issues are addressed:
 - all Internet sessions are supervised by a teacher
 - the school regularly monitors pupils' Internet usage

We are satisfied that we have addressed all the above issues, however as changes frequently occur, especially in the area of technology, we will address the attending issues regularly.

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.

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 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, 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.

Review and Ratification

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of St. Patrick's NS on October 17th 2023. The Policy will be reviewed in 2026/2027 or earlier if necessary following the publication of new guidelines.

Signed: _____ **Date:** _____

Kieran Leahy

Chairperson, Board of Management