



SAINT FINIAN'S NATIONAL SCHOOL

Anti-Bullying Policy

2023/2024

Anti- Bullying Policy

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 Saint Finian'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 which were published in **September 2013**.

THIS POLICY MUST BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE SCHOOLS OVERALL CODE OF BEHAVIOUR AND EXISTING FRIENDSHIP AND INCLUSION POLICY.

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

The BOM has overall responsibility to ensure that this policy is effective, sustainable and measured. The BOM must ensure that accountability is of the highest standard and frequently appraise the outcomes of the strategies and measures contained within the policy.

ISM Team have a clear role to act in a leadership capacity within the school community, stimulating a whole school approach to preventing and tackling bullying and modelling best practice.

The Principal of Saint Finian's National School as key leader strongly influences attitudes and sets standards in relation to dealing with bullying.

Teachers must act as good role models and not misuse authority, but be fair, clear and consistent in their disciplinary measures.

(c) A school-wide approach:

- A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that:
 - build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils;
 - Explicitly address the issues of cyber bullying and identity-based bullying including, in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
 - Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
 - Supports for staff; Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies)
 - On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.
 - The assistance of Gardaí, Tusla and Community Workers may be required in some cases

(d) A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact

Saint Finian's National School endeavours to put in place appropriate systems to ensure that ALL relevant members of the school community (parents, pupils, staff and the wider community) have a shared understanding of what constitutes bullying behaviour as defined in this policy.

(e) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils

Staff members have a distinct responsibility to ensure that supervision of pupils in class is effective and consistent.

Supervision in playground areas must be managed and conducted effectively, with particular attention given to 'hot spots' or 'hot times' eg arrival & dismissal.

(f) Supports for staff

Regular discussion and review of policy and procedures is essential to support staff on a continuous basis.

All staff must have a uniform interpretation of what is expected in relation to bullying, how to identify possible bullying behaviours, how to manage disclosures and how to deal effectively with incidents of bullying within the classroom context.

Staff must be aware that supporting one another is a key aspect of prevention and new/inexperienced members of staff must be given every opportunity to discuss concerns and model best practice.

CPD in relation to Anti Bullying Strategies will be supported and encouraged for all members of staff.

(g) Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and

(h) On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

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 conduct, 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.

This policy applies to activities and events that take place:

- During school time (including break times)
- School tours/trips
- Extra-curricular activities

Saint Finian's National School reserves the right to take action against bullying perpetrated outside the school which spills over into the school.

The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying in accordance with the Anti -Bullying Procedures for Primary & Post Primary Schools

Principal - Maria O'Connell

Acting Deputy Principal – Terry Martin

ISM Team: Grace Jordan, Maureen Fitzpatrick, Eorcha Jennings, Lisa Connolly

All class teachers

Pastoral Care Team Members

HSCCL Teacher – Grace Jordan

Any other – SNAs will assist teachers in monitoring pupils and activities on yard

Education and prevention strategies
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School-wide approach

- A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.
- The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- 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
- Professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teachers
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parents/guardians and the wider school community.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parents/guardians sign and accept the Code of Behaviour of the school on enrolment.
- The implementation of regular (e.g. per year) whole school awareness measures e.g. friendship tokens, outside experts in anti-bullying workshops to take place in the senior end of the school, Motus Learning (Mental Health) workshops for 6th class each year, SCP - friendship groups, SET - Social and Emotional Groups and Nurture all contribute to our positive wellbeing.

- Encourage a culture of telling

Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.:

- Direct approach to the teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
- Hand note up with homework.
- Make a phone call to the school
- Anti-bully or Worry box?
- Get a parent/guardian or friend to tell on your behalf.
- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.

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.
 - An Incident of bullying behaviour on the yard will be noted and recorded by the teacher on duty/yard duty in the 'red book' and this will be given to the classroom teacher to read and address.
 - While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher must keep a written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same
 - The relevant teacher must inform the principal of all incidents being investigated.

Formal Stage I-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 her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

The recording template is maintained by the principal.

Teachers' records are retained on Aladdin. All written report templates given to the Principal will be retained in the filing cabinet in the Principal's Office.

Formal Stage 2

The relevant teacher must use the recording template attached to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

In cases where she/he considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after she/he has determined that bullying behaviour occurred; and All confirmed instances of bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

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 – Restorative Practice
- Working with parent/guardian to support school interventions
- No Blame Approach
- Circle Time
- Restorative interviews
- Restorative conferencing

Saint Finian's is committed to exploring these interventions further:

- The traditional successful disciplinary approach
- Strengthening the victim
- Mediation
- Restorative Practice
- The Support Group Method
- The Method of Shared Concern

- An Incident of bullying behaviour on the yard will be noted and recorded by the teacher on duty/yard duty in the 'red book' and this will be given to the classroom teacher to read and address.
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach and use the Restorative Practice questions and worksheet.
- The Incident will be investigated – What happened? What were you thinking about at the time? What have your thoughts been since? Who do you think has been affected by your actions? In what way were they affected? What do you need to do now to make things right?
- An effort will be made to resolve any issues and to restore as far as practicable, the relationships.
- The teacher will exercise professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and as to how it can be resolved.
- If a group is involved, they will be met both individually and as a group. Each member will be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone is clear about what everyone else has said. This account will be recorded. (Restorative Practice)
- 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;
- Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way, and will be expected to assist the investigation.
- Children should understand there are no innocent bystanders if they remain passive where bullying is concerned—All bystanders must report bullying.
- The alleged “bully” will be asked to reflect on his/her behaviour and its consequences for himself/herself and for the person who is the victim. (Restorative Practice)
- 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 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;
- 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; If necessary the aggressor will be asked to sign an undertaking that "this behaviour will not reoccur."

Follow up and recording

In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of 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 or Deputy Principal
1. *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.*
 2. *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.*
 3. *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.*

Implementation of curricula

- The full implementation of the SPHE and the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.
- Circle time
- Restorative Practice
- Social Groups and the use of Talk About programme

- Weaving Wellbeing in service training commenced in December 2017 and implementation of the programme thereafter
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in anti-bullying and behaviour management
- 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 additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.
- Through the means of curricular and extracurricular activities to develop positive self worth.
- Developing pupil's awareness of identity-based bullying and in particular transphobic bullying, i.e. the "Growing Up" lesson in SPHE. Particular account will also be taken of the important and unique role pupils with Special Educational Needs have to play in our school.
- NEPS programmes on www.neps.ie (Incredible Years, Friends for Life - teachers trained in these programmes will form a cluster and provide in service for all teachers in the school.)

Bullying relating to SEN

Any child can be a victim of bullying but some children might be more vulnerable than others. This can include those children with Special Educational Needs. These pupils often do not have the same social skills or ability to communicate in order to defend themselves or even be aware of bullying behaviour. These children often trust everyone surrounding them and might be taken advantage of due to their limited capacity to comprehend social cues and situations. This is why all staff need to be ever vigilant looking for these cues.

They can be the victim of taunting or name calling, mocked because of a physical disability or learning need or set up to be ridiculed by other pupils. This can often occur online through cyber-bullying or offline in the school yard.

Bullying can have a serious and drastic effect on the self-esteem of children with Special Educational Needs.

St. Finian's approach to preventing and dealing with bullying joins up with other relevant school policies and ensures that all the services that provide for pupils with disabilities work together.

The approaches used to reducing the likelihood of bullying include developing social skills, ensuring and improving inclusion and creating and maintaining a positive school culture which encourages trust, care, consideration, support and respect for all and having an open dialogue between all staff and pupils to provide children with the opportunities to raise any concerns they may have in a comfortable environment. Children must be encouraged to approach members of staff with any problem knowing they will be listened to and it will be acted upon.

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.

There are agreed supervision and monitoring practices in the school:

Mobile phones - Saint Finian's is moving to become a Mobile Phone Free school. In exceptional circumstances a parent may request through the HSCL that a mobile phone is permitted in school. Mobile phones are generally not permitted on school tours/outings except in special circumstances

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 within school time.

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.

Date This Policy Was Adopted

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on:

Date: October 2017

Availability of This Policy This policy has been made available to school personnel and provided to the Parents Association.

Review of This Policy 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.

Signed: _____

Helen Coleman

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: September 2023

