St Patrick's National School

Coinnigh an solas ar lasadh

Slane, Co. Meath

(041) 982 4229
office@slanens.ie
www.slanens.ie
Roll No: 18040L
Acting Principal:
Lorna Gerrard

Revision No. 15
Date: December 2022

Anti-Bullying Policy

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB), the Board of Management of St. Patrick's N.S., Slane has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* which were published in September 2013.
2. The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

- A positive school culture and climate which-
  - is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
  - encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
  - promotes respectful relationships across the school community.
- Effective leadership;
- A school-wide approach;
- A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that-
  - build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
  - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
- Supports for staff;
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

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3. In accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* bullying is defined as follows:

Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted, by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
- cyber-bullying and
- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging e.g., 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.*

4. 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*):

Class Teacher of pupil accused of/being bullied

Lorna Gerrard School Principal (Acting)

Debbie Connor Deputy Principal (Acting)

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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 *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

Each year at assemblies and in classes, pupils are reminded of the school messages in relation to dealing with issues where they feel uncomfortable 1. Say no and try to sort yourself "that was not very nice. That hurt me. I think you should say sorry. If you don't say sorry I will have to tell the teacher". 2 Walk away and tell.

During the year each class undertakes Social Personal Health Education lessons on the themes of personal safety, anti-bullying and friendship using the Stay Safe, Walk Tall and Relationships and Sexuality Education programmes.

A training day facilitated by a qualified facilitator is carried out every two years for pupils from 3rd to 6th class with follow up meeting for their parents/guardians in school that evening to educate pupils on internet safety.

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 (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*) :

1. All reports of bullying, no matter how minor, are noted, investigated and dealt with by teachers. In that way pupils will gain confidence in "telling". We in St. Patrick's N.S., Slane consider this confidence factor is of vital importance. Serious cases of bullying behaviour by pupils are referred immediately to the principal or deputy principal. All incidents of bullying or suspected bullying are noted in the **Appendix 3 Template for recording bullying behaviour** which is kept for five years.
2. Parents or guardians of victims and bullies are informed by the principal or deputy principal as soon as possible of incidents so that they are given the opportunity to discuss the matter. They are then in a position to help and support their children before a crisis occurs.
3. Parents/Guardians can make enquiries regarding incidents of bullying which they might suspect or that have come to their attention through their children or other parents/guardians to the class teacher, deputy principal or principal. We in St. Patrick's N.S., Slane make clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
4. Individual teachers record and take appropriate measures regarding reports of bullying behaviour in accordance with the school's policy and code of behaviour and discipline.
5. The offending party will be deemed to have breached the school's Code of Conduct and sanctions will be applied from level 4.
6. The non-teaching staff, such as secretaries, SNAs, caretakers and cleaners are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the appropriate teaching member of staff.
7. Parents will be made aware of this behaviour and requested to come and discuss it with the teacher/principal with the view to resolving the problem.
8. The situation will continue to be monitored to ensure that the problem has been resolved.

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9. In the case of a complaint regarding a staff member, this should normally in the first instance be raised with the staff member in question and if necessary, with the principal.
10. Where cases, relating to either a pupil or a teacher remain unresolved at school level, the matter should be referred to the school's Board of Management. If it is not resolved at Board level the matter may be referred to the Department of Education.

6. 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*) :

Pupils who have been bullied and who have bullied:

Class teachers and those on yard or other areas of supervision will monitor pupils' progress on an ongoing basis.

If required, Special Educational Needs staff will facilitate opportunities to participate in activities such as friendship groups, social skills groups, or other practical projects to raise self esteem and confidence.

A restorative approach will be used when dealing with conflicts that arise (Restorative Practice Questions)

Parents will also be informed of ongoing monitoring in school by school staff and will be asked for feedback from home.

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:

- The Stay Safe Programme
- SPHE
- RSE Programme
- Walk Tall Programme
- Anti-Bullying website http://www.tacklebullying.ie/ set up by the Department of Education and Skills in conjunction with this initiative

  Internet Safety Talk for both parents and children biennially

  Computer classes offered covering topics of staying safe online
- Posters and books addressing cyber-bullying in classrooms

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:

- The Stay Safe Programme
- SPHE
- RSE Programme

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- Walk Tall Programme
- Cineáltas Action Plan on Bullying
- Restorative Practice
- Programmes such as 'Zones of Regulation' and 'Stop, Think, Do'

The school will also work with the alleged bullies and their victims in revising the programmes above, and with one-to-one support in resolving the issues raised.

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying involves discussing the incidents with the pupils, reassuring them that they were right to bring the events to the attention of staff. Pupils are reassured that they were right to tell and their actions will help others. They will be reminded that they should tell again if they have any new concerns. The teacher(s) involved and the principal will check from time to time with the child that everything is ok.

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 14/12/2022 [date].

10. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

11. 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 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.

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Signed: Richard Malla
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: 14/12/22

Signed: Lorna Gerrard
(Principal)

Date: 14/12/2022.