



## Anti - Bullying Policy

### Introduction:

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. John the Apostle, Knocknacarra National School (hereafter known as the 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. 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 following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour

### Rationale:

This policy is in place in order to ensure that pupils have the right to learn in a supportive caring and safe environment, without the fear of being bullied. This School has a clear policy on the promotion of respect for everyone. All staff and pupils are aware that bullying is not acceptable behaviour. This policy promotes this belief and provides clear strategies for teachers, pupils and parents to deal with bullying in a firm, fair clear, prompt and positive manner.

### Aims:

This policy aims:

- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teachers, all staff, pupils, parents/guardians.
- To create a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To ensure comprehensive supervision and monitoring measures through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation.
- To develop procedures for noting, investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To implement a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour.
- To work with appropriate agencies in countering all forms of bullying and anti-bullying behaviour.

- To increase co-operation between home and school regarding the issue of bullying.
- To foster the development of a sense of responsibility and self – discipline in pupils based on respect among all members of the school community.
- To share the task with parents/guardians of equipping pupils with the necessary skills to deal with others

**Definition of Bullying:** Dept. of Education and Science guidelines define bullying as ... *repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against others. Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, which should not be condoned, can scarcely be described as bullying. However, when the behaviour is systematic and ongoing, it is bullying and any pupil can be a victim or a perpetrator of bullying. Why do pupils bully? It is generally accepted that bullying is a learned behaviour. Pupils who bully tend to display aggressive attitudes combined with a low level of self-esteem. Children become bullies for many reasons.*

*Some of these are:*

- They feel insecure and inadequate
- They may be bullied by parents or older children at home
- They may find it difficult to socialise with their peers and so pick on younger more vulnerable children
- They may feel they must succeed at all costs.
- They may be very spoilt and go totally unchallenged at home
- They may be constantly humiliated by others and in turn do this to other children
- They may be physically, sexually or emotionally abused themselves
- Some children become involved in bullying by acting as bystanders or supporters of a bully.
- In this case it must be pointed out that they are equally guilty of bullying. Where can bullying happen?

Bullying can take place anywhere:

- In school, in class, in the playground, corridor, toilets
- On the way to or from school
- At activities outside of school
- On the road/street/in the home etc.

NOTE: factors having their origins in differences or conflicts between parties outside the school may contribute to increased incidents of bullying within the school.

## Types of Bullying:

### A. Pupil Behaviour:

**Physical Aggression:** This includes pushing, shoving and punching, kicking, poking and tripping people up. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While children commonly engage in ‘mess fights’ they can often be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.

**Damage to Property:** Personal property can be the focus of attention for the bully; this may result in damage to clothing, school books and other learning material or interference with a pupil’s locker or bicycle. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.

**Extortion:** Demands for money may be made, often accompanied by threats (sometimes carried out) in the event of the victim not promptly “paying up”. Victims’ lunches may be taken. Victims may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to the bully. Sometimes this tactic is used with the sole purpose of incriminating the victim. **Intimidation:** Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation: it is based on the use of very aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon. Particularly upsetting to victims can be the so-called ‘look’ – a facial expression that conveys aggression and/or dislike

**Abusive Telephone Calls:** The abusive anonymous telephone call is a form of verbal intimidation or bullying. The anonymous phone call is very prevalent where teachers are the victims of bullying.

**Isolation:** This form of bullying behaviour, a certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or all, of the class group. The person engaged in bullying behaviour usually initiates this practice. It may be accompanied by writing insulting remarks about the victim on blackboards or in public places, by passing around notes about or drawings of the victim or by whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard.

**Name-calling:** Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s), which hurts, insults or humiliates should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour; most name-calling of this type refers to physical appearance, e.g. ‘big ears’, size, clothes worn, colour or ethnic origin. Accent or distinctive voice characteristics may attract negative attention. Academic ability can also provoke name-calling. This tends to operate at two extremes: first, there are those who are singled out for attention because they are perceived to be slow or weak, academically. These pupils are often referred to as ‘dummies’, ‘dopes’ or ‘donkeys’. At the other extreme are those who, because they are perceived as high achievers, are labelled ‘swots’, ‘brain-boxes’, ‘licks’ ‘teachers’ pets’ etc.

**Slagging:** This behaviour usually refers to the good-natured banter, which goes on as part of the

normal social interchange between people. However, when this slagging extends to very personal remarks aimed again and again at the one individual about appearance, clothing, personal hygiene or involves references of an uncomplimentary nature to members of one's family, particularly if couched in sexual innuendo, then it assumes the form of bullying. It may also take the form of suggestive remarks about a pupil's sexual orientation.

**Cyber Bullying:** Any form of bullying that repeatedly occurs over any electronic devices i.e. phones and computers. This can include slagging, name calling, defamation of character and any other threatening behaviour.

### **B. Teacher Behaviour**

A teacher may, unwittingly or otherwise, engage in or reinforce bullying behaviour in a number of ways:

- Using sarcasm or other insulting or demeaning form of language when addressing pupils, making negative comments about a pupil's appearance or background.
- Humiliating, directly or indirectly, a pupil who is particularly academically weak or outstanding, or vulnerable in other ways.
- Using threatening or intimidating gestures, or any form of degrading physical contact or exercises.

### **Effects of Bullying:**

Pupils who are being bullied may develop feelings of insecurity and extreme anxiety and thus may become more vulnerable. Self-confidence may be damaged with a consequent lowering of their self-esteem. While they may not talk about what is happening to them, their suffering is indicated through changes in mood and behaviour. Bullying may occasionally result in suicide. It is, therefore, important to be alert to changes in behaviour as early intervention is desirable.

### **Indications of Bullying Behaviour, Signs and Symptoms:**

The following signs/symptoms may suggest that a pupil is being bullied:

- Anxiety about travelling to and from school – requesting parents to drive or collect them, changing route of travel, avoiding regular times for travelling to and from school
- Unwillingness to go to school, refusal to attend, mitching
- Deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school
- Pattern of physical illnesses (e.g. headaches, stomach aches)
- Unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour; it may be particularly noticeable before

returning to school after weekends or more especially after longer school holidays;

- Visible signs of anxiety or distress – stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, difficulty sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, bedwetting;
- Spontaneous out-of-character comments about either pupils or teachers
- Possessions missing or damaged
- Increased requests for money or stealing money
- Unexplained bruising or cuts or damaged clothing
- Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling him/her.

Those signs do not necessarily mean that a pupil is being bullied. If repeated or occurring in combination, those signs do warrant investigation in order to establish what is affecting the pupil.

### **Characteristics of Bullying Behaviour:**

#### **The Victim:**

Any pupil, through no fault of his or her own may be bullied. It is common in the course of normal play for pupils to tease or taunt each other. However, at a certain point, teasing and taunting may become forms of bullying behaviour. As pupils are particularly quick to notice differences in others, pupils who are perceived as different are those more prone to encounter such behaviour. However, the pupils who are most at risk of becoming victims are those who react in a vulnerable and distressed manner. The seriousness and duration of the bullying behaviour is directly related to the pupil's continuing response to the verbal, physical or psychological aggression. It is of note that some pupils can unwittingly behave in a very provocative manner that attracts bullying behaviour.

#### **The Bully:**

It is generally accepted that bullying is a learned behaviour. Pupils who bully tend to display aggressive attitudes combined with a low level of self-discipline. They can lack any sense of remorse; often they convince themselves that the victim deserves the treatment meted out. Pupils who bully can also be attention seeking; often they set out to impress bystanders and enjoy the reaction their behaviour provokes. They tend to lack the ability to empathise. They are unaware or indifferent to the victim's feelings. Others seem to enjoy inflicting pain. It is of note that many bullies suffer from a lack of confidence and have low self-esteem. It is not uncommon to find that pupils who engage in bullying are also bullied. They tend to be easily provoked and frequently provoke others.

## **Strategies for the prevention of Bullying:**

*‘At the centre of a whole school response to bullying is the creation of a positive school climate which focuses on respect for the individual...’ Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour in Primary and Post-Primary Schools, 1993 Equip the children with positive skills*

- Teach children to be assertive: problem-solving skills, positive skills to stand up for themselves verbally, not violently.
- Show children safe ways to help others. Expectations from being a friend - take action if they see someone being hurt, or if they are hurt themselves.
- Hold children accountable. If children stand by and watch someone being bullied, make it clear that their behaviour hurts the victim too. ‘Be an upstander not a bystander’
- Get to know their friends. Encourage your children to get to know their peers.
- Be a good example. If you see someone being bullied or hurt, help them.
- Equip Student Officers with the skills to identify, report and help to problem solve issues that may arise in class / yard or as an effect of cyberbullying
- Build empathy in children - role play, story, poetry, arts follow up discussions and participation in drama workshops dealing with bullying from outside agencies
- Help them develop social skills. From a young age, develop children’s communication and social skills and encourage children to play with others and to be friends with many different people. Have them spend time with people of different ages, backgrounds, races, ethnicities, religions, and mental and physical abilities

Knocknacarra NS fosters a positive school ethos among pupils, staff and parents. There is a strong sense of community and cooperation between Board of Management, staff, pupils and parents, and each has a clear role in the prevention of bullying.

- Through a programme of positive action, the school promotes an atmosphere of happiness, friendship, openness, mutual respect and tolerance. This will be evident throughout the school.
- Positive self-esteem is fostered among the pupils by celebrating individual differences / achievements and by providing opportunities for success.
- Through the Whole School Use of the Incredible Years Programme, children experience continuous positive reinforcement through proactive teaching methodologies and classroom management.
- Teachers will encourage and use the 4 R system: REACT, REFUSE, RECORD, REPORT.
- There is a whole school awareness and adherence to “The Golden Rules”, through strong establishment, explanation, reinforcement and reiteration.
- The implementation of the ‘Playworks Programme’ and very clear yard strategies, monitoring and supervision provide a safe and inclusive environment for all children at yard time.

● Supervision and in-class wet day activities are in place in all classrooms to ensure children are busy and active at break times.

● Anti – Bullying Officers from Student Leadership Team, yard watchers/ yellow bibs for Yard Helpers and Yard Communication book for Staff on supervision

● Playground pals/buddy system.

● Friendship area/ Peace corner

● Teaching of cooperative games.

● The school celebrates diversity and individual difference of all nationalities and abilities within the school community Strategies for prevention of bullying:

● Implement preventative strategies in order to lessen the occurrence of bullying incidents within the school community;

- The Incredible Years Programme,
- Friends for Life and Fun Friends programmes,
- Mind Up Programme, promotion of emotional resilience,
- Mindfulness and Brain Breaks as a practice in classrooms,
- Use of the Worry Box in classrooms,
- Teaching skills of empathy and awareness of others
- Respecting and celebrating diversity and difference within the school community
- Friendship Week, Anti – Bullying Week,
- Health Promotion and Wellbeing Staff pupil and parent committee
- School surveys
- Peer mentoring

● Provide one to one / small group support to children with SEN to ensure they understand and achieve the learning outcomes intended.

● According to the NCCA Guidelines, we aim to provide additional support to children with general learning difficulties to ensure all children can be better enabled to achieve the learning outcomes of the SPHE curriculum / Anti – Bullying lessons.

([www.sess.ie/resources/curricular-material](http://www.sess.ie/resources/curricular-material))

- Webwise Primary Programme is used in order to assist and support teachers when teaching about safe and responsible uses of the internet.  
[www.webwise.ie/teachers/resources/](http://www.webwise.ie/teachers/resources/)

### **Supports for staff:**

The Board of Management, through the principal, must 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. Supports for staff should be appropriate to the individual's role and should enable staff to recognise bullying, implement effective strategies for preventing bullying and where appropriate, intervene effectively in bullying cases. The Board of Management must also make appropriate arrangements to ensure that temporary and substitute staff have sufficient awareness of the school's code of behaviour and its Anti-bullying policy. The policy is included in Substitute and Welcome Folders for Staff.

**Parents and Guardians Role:** It is important to be realistic, it will not be possible for a single child to assert his/her rights if attacked by a group. Children should be advised to get away and tell an adult in situations such as this.

- Teaching your child to say "No" in a good assertive tone of voice and to carry himself/herself in a confident way will help your child to deal with many situations. A child's self-image and body language may send out messages to potential bullies. Children should be encouraged to talk about bullying and given an opportunity to express their concerns.
- Approach your child's teacher if the bullying is school related. It is important for you to understand that bullying in school can be difficult for teachers to detect because of the large numbers of children involved. Teachers will appreciate bullying being brought to light. School bullying requires that parents and teachers work together for a resolution.
- Very often parental advice to a child is to "hit back" at the bully, if the abuse is physical. This is not always realistic, as it requires a huge amount of courage and indeed sometimes makes the situation worse. Children should not be encouraged to engage in violent behaviour. Teaching children to be more assertive and to tell is far more positive and effective.
- Keep an account of incidents to help you assess how serious the problem is. Many children, with a little help overcome this problem very quickly.
- Maintaining links with school: knowledge of the SPHE curriculum areas, attending Curriculum Overview evenings, Parent Association events and guest speakers related to the areas of Wellbeing, emotional and social skill development and bullying



### ***What if your child is a bully?***

Don't panic. This may be a temporary response to something else in the child's life, e.g. a new baby, a death in the family, a difficult home problem etc. Give your child an opportunity to talk about anything that could be upsetting him/her.

- Don't punish bullying by being a bully yourself. Hitting and verbal attack will make the situation worse. Talk to your child and try to find out if there is a problem. Explain how the victim felt. Try to get the child to understand the victim's point of view. This would need to be done over time.
- Bullies often suffer from poor self-esteem. Use every opportunity you can to praise good, considerate, helpful behaviour. Do not only look for negatives.
- Talk to the child's teacher and try to find out more about the child's school behaviour. Enlist the teacher's help in dealing with this. It is important that you both take the same approach.
- If the situation is serious, you may need to ask the school or your GP to refer your child to the child guidance clinic for help.
- In cases where it is determined that bullying has occurred, a meeting is held with the parents of both parties, as appropriate. Actions to be taken are explained and parental support is enlisted.
- Follow-up meetings with the Principal or an appointed teacher and the children involved may take place.
- Identify periods of high risk - teachers are required to be vigilant.
- From time to time professional speakers / workshops are invited to talk to staff and/or parents / children to give ideas on dealing with both the victim and the bully (Humourfit.ie Michael O Sullivans' Play, Sticks and Stones / Galway Education Centre /Community Guard)
- In the case of a complaint against a staff member or parent, the incident will be raised first with the people in question and if unresolved will be mediated by the Principal or Deputy Principal with the people in question (see Complaints Procedure). Conflict Resolution strategies will be used to deal with the conflict in a non- aggressive manner. Parents may submit their concerns in writing to the Board of Management

<b>Sanctions:</b>
-------------------

Teachers will establish and clearly communicate expectations for behaviour and the unacceptable nature of bullying behaviour. This will ensure that the Anti-bullying policy is pro-active rather than reactive. The degree of misdemeanour – will be determined by the findings recorded on incident record sheets, teacher communication and Aladdin reporting. Sanctions will be as follows:

Examples of steps to be taken by teachers when dealing with Minor Misdemeanours

- The class teacher will normally deal with classroom misdemeanours.
- Verbal reprimand and reasoning with the pupil, including advice on how to improve, setting realistic targets.
- Time out from friends and others (to reflect on the misbehaviour).
- Loss of privileges for the individual involved only such as ‘Golden Time’, Game time, extra recreation time – this will be in accordance with the child’s age  
i.e. 7 minutes Time Out for a 7-year-old child etc
- Noting incidence of yard misbehaviour in yard book
- Note in homework journal or other to parents.

**Examples of steps to be taken when dealing with REGULAR occurrences of Minor Misdemeanours:**

A record is kept of regular instances of misdemeanour. Following three instances of misdemeanour the pupil is sent to Principal/Deputy Principal. The child will receive supervised Time Out during break time. The child will write/illustrate an account of what they have done. Details of all misbehaviour will be communicated with parents / guardians.

**Examples of steps to be taken when dealing with Serious Misdemeanours:**

Pupil / pupils are sent to the Principal/ Deputy Principal. The Principal/Deputy Principal contacts parent/guardian. Pupils may be removed from an activity if endangering themselves or others. The child will write/illustrate an account of what they have done. Class teacher contacts and / or meets with parent(s)/guardian. The child receives a (supervised) Time Out. A detailed record is kept of all serious misdemeanours.

**The Anti- Bullying Policy and its link to other Policies:**

- SPHE (Social Personal & Health Education) - Bullying is addressed under the strand: Myself and Others, Strand Unit – My friends and other people. Other examples include lessons on self-esteem, building good relationships, good and bad secrets, being a ‘telling school’,
- PE curriculum: Sporting activities can provide excellent opportunities for channelling and learning how to control aggression.
- Code of behaviour – promotion of positive behaviour, positive atmosphere, good relationships ensures a reduction in bullying.

- Record keeping – safe and secure facilities for sensitive data, factual account of incidents. Log of incidents recorded which may show a pattern, stressing the importance of record keeping. Use of internal Aladdin system to log incidents for all teachers. See appendix for steps to accurately input information
- Home-school Links: Parents understand the term bullying, feel confident to tell the teacher /principal about concerns.
- Monitoring and Review Teachers are aware of places and occasions of where bullying may occur and are proactive about ensuring it doesn't occur.
- Health Promotion and Wellbeing action plan – annually included are new initiatives and aims in order to target bullying behaviour.
- The principal is responsible for monitoring and reviewing the policy at staff level annually and reports any review deemed necessary to the staff and the Board. ‘The Board of Management has a role to play in the maintenance of desirable standards of behaviour in a school. It should be supportive of the Principal Teacher in the application of a fair code of behaviour and discipline within the school’ (Circular 20/90) The Board of Management are involved in the drafting and regular review of this policy.

**Reference to other policies:**

- SPHE Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Home School Links Policy
- Physical Education Policy
- Religious Education Scheme

<b>Success Criteria:</b>
--------------------------

- A happy safe atmosphere, with a culture of openness where good relationships exist between all members within the school community.
- When you hear mantras back from children ‘ In this school we do not tolerate bullying .....’ ‘Be an Upstander not a Bystander’ Staff members use the mantra “In this school we tell.”
- When children ‘tell’ if they are bullied and trust that their concerns will be responded to promptly.
- Children are aware of and obey the rules and are confident about reports incidents to the school authorities.

- Staff apply the rules of listening, reporting, investigating and reporting to principal.
- Growth in self-discipline.
- Comments or compliments on positive relationships within the school.
- When parents and staff feel confident that incidents are being dealt with positively and fairly.
- When members of staff are supportive and cooperative in managing incidents. Explanation of Abbreviations SPHE – Social Personal and Health Education NEPS – National Educational Psychological Service

<b>Ratification and Communication:</b>
--

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management of St. John the Apostle, Knocknacarra NS, on November 27<sup>th</sup> 2018 and subsequently communicated to the school community via the school’s website. This policy is reviewed annually.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Frank Laffey,**  
**Chairperson, Board of Management**

## **Appendix 1 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 around the school.
- Involve pupils in the development of these messages.
- Catch children 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.
- 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 2 Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its Implementation**

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation. The following checklist must be used for this purpose. 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.

- 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?
- Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?
- Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?
- 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?
- Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?
- Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?
- Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?
- Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?
- Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?
- Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?
- 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?
- Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?
- Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?
- Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?
- 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?
- Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?
- Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?



## **Appendix 4 - Anti-bullying Policy 2018-19**

**If a teacher wants to note an incident of bullying then they need to do the following:**

- search for the student on Aladdin, highlight the student and press view.
  
- click on notes & documents (in blue at the top)
  
- click new note or document from template (highlighted in grey)
  
- select bullying report from the drop down menu, click ok
  
- this brings up a bullying report template which the teacher needs to fully complete and save.
  
- teachers can view bullying reports by going into reports and selecting note/behaviour reports