

St Joseph's Girls Primary School.

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Roll # 19015R



Anti-Bullying Policy

School Position on Bullying

The St. Joseph's school community believes that each pupil has a right to an education free from fear and intimidation.

The school regards bullying as a serious infringement of individual rights and a serious threat to the self-esteem and self-confidence of targeted pupil(s). Therefore it does not tolerate bullying of any kind.

Every report of bullying is treated seriously and dealt with, having due regard for the well being of the targeted pupil(s) and the perpetrator(s).

An 'Anti-Bullying Team,' made up of staff members, exists to cultivate an environment free from bullying.

The immediate priority, should a bullying incident occur, is ending the bullying, (*thereby protecting the person(s) being targeted*) and resolving the issues and restoring the relationships involved insofar as is practicable using a 'Reform, not Blame' approach.

All pupils are expected to contribute to the creation and maintenance of a safe environment in the school. On becoming aware of any bullying situation, in or outside the school, involving members of the school community they should notify a trusted responsible adult. Bullying behaviour is too serious not to report.

Pupils' participation in school life in general is encouraged through existing school structures. Awareness of bullying, and willingness to take action to prevent or stop it, is part of this participation.

Anti-Bullying Policy

1. In accordance with the requirements of the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000* and the code of behavior guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of St. Joseph's GNS has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall

code of behavior. 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 recognizes 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 behavior:

- 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 behavior 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;
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
- Supports for staff;
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behavior (including use of established intervention strategies); and
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

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

Bullying is unwanted negative behavior, 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 behavior 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 behavior, 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 behavior.

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 behavior.

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

This definition includes a wide range of behaviour, whether verbal or written, whether physical or social, whether targeting person or property, whether carried out directly or indirectly or through any electronic or other medium, which could harm a pupil or undermine her/his self-esteem or self-confidence.

Appendix 1 gives a list of specific examples of bullying behaviour. This list is not exhaustive.

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 in this school is/are as follows:
 - Principal
 - Deputy Principal
 - All Class Teachers

Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

5. **The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity based bullying) used by the school are as follows:**
 - 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 behavior

- The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extra curricular 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
- 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.
- Use of yard book to record incidents at break and lunch time
- The full implementation of the SPHE, RSE and Stay Safe Programmes
- At least five awareness-raising exercises per school year for each class group (*e.g. from the 'Awareness-Raising' strand of the Anti-Bullying Campaign, via its website*), pro-actively explaining the nature and variety, causes, consequences and unacceptability of bullying.
 - Pupils are helped to examine the issue of bullying in a calm rational way, outside of the tense context of particular bullying incidents. In the process they are made more aware of the nature of bullying and the various forms that it can take.
 - Pupils are made aware that the consequences of bullying behaviour are always bad for those who are targeted, even if this is not always obvious at the time.
 - Pupils are encouraged to recognise, reject and report bullying behaviour, either spontaneously or through questionnaires that are regularly used in the school. 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.
- Through presentations or other exercises, the school staff and parents/guardians are made aware of the nature of bullying and the signs that might indicate that a pupil is being bullied. They are encouraged to be vigilant in watching out for signs of bullying and to report any suspicion of bullying they may have to the 'Relevant Teacher' (in the case of staff members) or any staff member (in the case of parents/guardians).
- Through regular reports in school newsletters, assemblies and other communications, as well as at meetings with parent/guardian groups, parents/guardians are regularly informed of school activities.
- An annual anti-bullying/friendship day/week

- The continued implementation of the schools Acceptable Use Policy in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored.
- The continued implementation of the schools mobile phone policy and Code of Behaviour policy.
- 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

6. 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 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:

Reporting bullying behavior

- Any pupil or parent/guardian may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretary, special needs assistants, caretakers, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behavior witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

Investigation and dealing with incidents:

- Incidents of Bullying will be dealt with on a staged basis.

Stage 1-

- All reports of bullying must be dealt with initially by the class teacher. When a pupil tells a teacher s/he is being bullied, it is important to gather all of the facts from both sides (What, where, when, who, why?). This will involve an **interview** with the alleged bully using template in Appendices.

- The school, through the relevant teacher, reserves the right to ask any pupil to write an account of what happened, as part of an investigation. This will be standard procedure and does not necessarily imply that a pupil is guilty of misbehaviour.
- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best to resolve the situation.
- The aim for the class teacher 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).
- Non-teaching staff will be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them to the relevant teacher.
- The Teacher should take a calm, unemotional, problem-solving approach.
- All sides are listened to separately and notes are taken.
- The notes are brief, factual and should be void of emotional, or judgemental language.
- Instances are investigated outside the classroom to avoid public humiliations.
- All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regards to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way. (See *Anti bullying Procedures for Primary and Post –Primary Schools 6.8.9 page 30-31*)for further suggestions.
- Where possible, a witness is present.
- 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. The 'Relevant Teacher' does not apportion blame but rather treats bullying behaviour as a 'mistake' that can and must be remedied. S/he emphasises that the intention is not to punish perpetrators but to talk to them, to explain how harmful and hurtful bullying is and to seek a promise that it will stop. If that promise is forthcoming and is honoured there will be no penalty and that will be the end of the matter. Pupils who report bullying therefore are not getting others 'in trouble' so much as enabling them to get out of trouble into which they may ultimately get if the bullying continues.
- The child/ children involved will be asked to sign “ **Pupil Behaviour Promise 1**” (See Appendices)
- When an investigation is completed and/or a bullying situation is resolved the 'Relevant Teacher' will complete a report, to include the findings of the investigation, the strategy adopted and the outcome of the intervention, as well as any other relevant information.

Stage 2-

- If this child has signed a promise but then chooses to break that promise and continue the bullying behaviour, this can then no longer be considered a 'mistake' . The Principal with the class teacher will interview the child/children again. It is explained to them that this is their second time offending and that they have not committed to their promise. Again attempts will be made to resolve the situation. Once more students will sign the "**Pupil Behaviour Promise 2**". This time this has to be signed by their parents. They are now advised that if they break this promise again , they will have a meeting with the principal and their parents in the office and could face suspension.
- Parents and pupils are required to cooperate with any investigations and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible.
- Information spoken about should not become available, so that the victim would be further tormented. (Needs to know basis)

Stage 3-

- If a child breaks their promise twice then any of the following sanctions may be imposed:
 - ❖ Parents informed of the nature and extent of the bullying behaviour with a view to agreeing a strategy whereby a promise to end the bullying behaviour would be honoured
 - ❖ She may be required to sign another promise counter signed by a parent/guardian
 - ❖ Parent(s)/Guardian(s) may be invited to a meeting with the relevant teacher and principal and the child may be put on detention
 - ❖ Parent(s)/Guardian(s) may be invited to a meeting with the relevant teacher and principal and the child may be suspended from school
 - ❖ The case may be referred to the Board of Management and the pupil may be expelled from the school
 - ❖ Other sanction deemed appropriate by principal and class teacher

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:

Bullied pupils:

- Are reassured from the outset that they are **not** to blame.
- Strategies for restoring self-esteem are explored between teachers and parents/guardians. Encouraging them to become involved in activities that help

develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school).

- Where deemed necessary, the child in consultation with parents may be referred for counselling.
- Staged approach- class support, school support(as per Continuum –Behavioural, Emotional and Social difficulties- NEPS).
- Bullied pupils may be chosen for Drama Therapy sessions.
- The parents of the pupils concerned will be advised to contact the local Gardai if appropriate.

Bullying pupils:

- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are not blamed or punished and get a 'clean sheet,'
- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are doing the right and honorable thing and giving them praise for this,
- Making adequate counseling facilities available to help those who need it learn other ways of meeting their needs besides violating the rights of others,
- Helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school),
- May be chosen for Drama therapy sessions and personal development sessions
- Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils' feelings of self-worth,
- In dealing with negative behavior in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child,
- In dealing with bullying behaviour seeking resolution and offering a fresh start with a 'clean sheet' and no blame in return for keeping a promise to reform.

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.

9. The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps as 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.

10. This policy was reviewed in May 2021 adopted by the Board of Management on the 14th June 2021.

11. 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 of Education and Skills and to the patron if requested.

12. 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 to the Department of Education and Skills and to the patron if requested.

Signed: _____

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: 14/06/2021

Signed: _____

(Principal)

Date: 14/06/2021

Date of next review: May 2023

Appendix 1.

Bullying can take a number of forms. These may include any of the following (this list is not exhaustive):

- **Repeated aggressive behaviour/attitude/body language, for example:**
 - Shouting and uncontrolled anger
 - Personal insults
 - Verbal abuse
 - Offensive language directed at an individual,
 - Continually shouting or dismissing others
 - Public verbal attacks/criticism
 - Domineering behaviour
 - Open aggression
 - Offensive gestures and unwanted physical contact
- **Intimidation, either physical, psychological or emotional, for example:**
 - Treating in a dictatorial manner
 - Ridicule
 - Persistent slugging
 - Deliberate staring with the intent to discomfort
 - Persistent rudeness in behaviour and attitude toward a particular individual
 - Asking inappropriate questions/making inappropriate comments re. personal life/family
 - Asking inappropriate questions/making inappropriate comments re. social life or schoolwork
- **Interference with property, for example:**
 - Stealing/damaging books or equipment
 - Stealing/damaging clothing or other property
 - Demanding money with menaces
 - Persistently moving, hiding or interfering with property
 - Marking/defacing property
- **Undermining/Public or Private Humiliation, for example:**
 - Condescending tone
 - Deliberately withholding significant information and resources
 - Writing of anonymous notes
 - Malicious, disparaging or demeaning comments
 - Malicious tricks/derogatory joke,
 - Knowingly spreading rumours
 - Belittling others' efforts, their enthusiasm or their new idea,
 - Derogatory or offensive nicknames (name-calling)
 - Using electronic or other media for any of the above (cyber bullying,
 - Disrespectfully mimicking a particular individual in his/her absence
 - Deliberately refusing to address issues focusing instead on the person
- **Ostracising or isolating, for example:**
 - Deliberately marginalising an individual
 - Deliberately preventing a person from joining a group
 - Deliberately preventing from joining in an activity, schoolwork-related or recreational
 - Blaming a pupil for things s/he did not do

