

Plean Scoile  
St Fiacc's NS

Anti-Bullying Policy



St. Fiacc's N.S.  
Fírinne le Misneach

<b>Formulated/Ratified/Reviewed</b>	<b>By</b>
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Signed Chairperson BOM

*Liam Dooley*

## **ANTI BULLYING POLICY**

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. Fiacc's Primary 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.

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.
- promotes respectful relationships across the school community through:

### **Effective leadership**

### **A school-wide approach**

### **A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact on the person involved**

### **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.

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 (See Anti-Cyber Bullying Policy appended).*

- *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*.

4. The **relevant teachers** for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows (who will be known as from here forward in this document as "**the relevant teacher**").

- **The class teacher/Special Education Needs Teacher**
- **Principal Mr John Brennan**
- **Deputy Principal Ms. Mary Fleming**

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

- Organising an Anti-Bullying Week to highlight the importance of our Anti-Bullying Policy, focusing on the importance of the role of the by-stander. Features of this week will be Anti-Bullying Art Competitions, Poetry Competitions, Drama, Assemblies and visits from Relevant Professionals.
- Involvement of Student Council / Playground Monitors in decision-making around prevention of bullying and to report any cases of bullying to class teacher / Deputy Principal / Principal.
- Public display of notices admonishing bullying behaviour and encouraging "buddy" behaviour. Involving pupils in development of these messages.
- Relevant Anti-Bullying merchandise eg. wrist bands, pencils etc. to be presented as prizes to those playing an active role in the Anti-Bullying Campaign.
- Websites dealing with the Anti-Bullying message to be shown to the appropriate classes including "Show Racism the Red Card" & Webwise.
- Implementation of the Stay Safe Programme every January/February/March and other aspects of the SPHE (Walk Tall, RSE Programme) Programme which teach children to be assertive, to develop a positive sense of self worth and how to recognise and say NO to Bullying. Pupils are encouraged to report incidences of bullying and are assured that all reports will be investigated.

## St Fiacc's Anti-Bullying Policy

- Utilising the School Completion Programme with targeted pupils to improve pro-social behaviour through In-School, After-School and Holiday period programmes.
  - Having a strong focus on inclusion for SEN pupils generally with particular focus on social skills on IEPs/IPLPs.
  - Constant focus on Group work throughout the curriculum and teaching aggressive pupils to manage their emotions during PE and participating on school teams.
  - Play Zones established in the playground to ensure that classes are grouped for playtime, thus ensuring that the younger pupils and older pupils are playing separately.
  - Explicitly addressing homophobic bullying during RSE in 5th /6th classes.
  - Addressing cyber bullying by teaching the *Webwise/My Selfie* lessons on alternating years in March/April and celebrating Safer Internet Day. The school will arrange a talk on good cyber practice at least every two years.
  - Supervision and monitoring of pupil activities and games, in class, in changing rooms and particularly in the school yard, where bullying is most likely to occur
  - Constant articulation of the school motto which espouses truth and courage.
  - Modelling of respectful behaviour by all staff. Consistently tackling derogatory language.
  - Identifying “hotspots” where supervision is less structured.
  - Extra curricular activities such as basketball, football, table quizzes, hurling, rounders, school choir & banna ceoil to be provided, encouraging sportsmanship, team work and loyalty.
  - Involvement of the Parents’ Association in organising events such as workshops and sponsoring of prizes for anti-bullying poster competition.
6. 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 :
- i. The primary aim for the relevant 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);
  - ii. In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
  - iii. All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. 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.
  - iv. Non-teaching staff such as the secretary, special needs assistant (SNA), caretaker, cleaners and breakfast club organiser are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

## St Fiacc's Anti-Bullying Policy

- v. Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible. St Fiacc's will address bullying behaviour that occurs elsewhere if it has a negative impact within the school.
- vi. All involved (including each set of pupils and parents) have the above approach explained to them from the outset.
- vii. Teachers are to take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.
- viii. Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- ix. All interviews are to be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved may also provide very useful information in this way.
- x. When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
- xi. If a group is involved, each member is to be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved will be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member is asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements.
- xii. Each member of a group is to be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher
- xiii. When it is deemed helpful, those involved may write down their account of the incident(s);
- xiv. In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved will 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 will give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils;
- xv. Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts will be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
- xvi. It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school.
- xvii. Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved will 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. This can have a therapeutic effect. However, if the pupil who has been bullied is reluctant to sit down with the bully, the pupils can be met separately, as this can revictimise the child.
- xviii. In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded by the relevant teacher in the recording template supplied with this Anti-Bullying document.
- xix. In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/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 parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal.
- xx. Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedure.
- xxi. In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

### **7. Procedures for recording bullying behaviour**

If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

(iii) The relevant teacher must use the recording template at **Appendix 3** to record the bullying behaviour and report it immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

The recording template at **Appendix 3** must be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable. It should also be noted that the timeline for recording bullying behaviour in the recording template at **Appendix 3** does not in any way preclude the relevant teacher from consulting the Principal or Deputy Principal at an earlier stage in relation to a case.

Bullying behaviour can be part of a continuum of behaviour rather than a stand-alone issue and in some cases behaviour may escalate beyond that which can be described as bullying to serious physical or sexual assault or harassment. To ensure that any such cases are dealt with appropriately, our school's antibullying policy is linked with our overall code of behaviour and provides for referral to be made to relevant external agencies and authorities where appropriate.

### **8. Supports for pupils affected by bullying**

- A programme of support for pupils is to be in place to provide or opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed.
- A programme of support for those pupils involved in bullying behaviour is also part of the school's intervention process. Pupils involved in bullying behaviour are to be provided with assistance on an ongoing basis. For those with low self-esteem, opportunities are developed to increase feelings of self-worth. Learning strategies applied within the school are to allow for the enhancement of those pupil's self-worth. Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help

them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others and therefore, the aid of outside agencies may be necessary.

- Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour should be encouraged to discuss them with teachers.

#### **9. 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.

#### **10. 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.

#### **11. Linkage with other Policies**

##### Code of Behaviour

The anti-bullying policy forms part of the overall school Code of Behaviour and the standards of behaviour that are outlined in the Code of Behaviour apply to the Anti-Bullying Policy of Saint Fiacc's NS.

##### Child Safeguarding Statement

St Fiacc's has formally modified Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools 2017

##### Acceptable Use Policy

The practices outlined in the Acceptable Use policy for safe use of the Internet must reflect the requirements of the anti-bullying procedures and must be adhered to at all times. This also applies to the use of other technological devices, including mobile devices.

##### Health & Safety

Our school has a written anti-bullying policy which has been circulated to all parents and staff to show to all children, parents and staff that bullying, either physical or verbal, is not tolerated either in school or on the way to or from school or on school bus. Moreover, everyone will be expected to ensure that bullying does not happen and will have a responsibility to tell – emphasising that this is not 'telling tales'

##### SPHE

###### *Implementation of SPHE / RSE:*

Circulars 22/2010 (Primary) and 23/2010 (Post Primary) "Social Personal and Health Education, Best Practice Guidelines" outline the approaches to the consistent implementation of the SPHE curriculum including RSE.

Circular 37/2010 (Post Primary) 'Relationships and Sexuality Education' outlines the obligations of Post Primary schools to:

- develop a school policy in regard to Relationships and Sexuality Education; and