



St. Peter's N.S. 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 Peter'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.

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) 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

(c) A school-wide approach

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

(e) 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;

(f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils

(g) Supports for staff

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

(i) 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 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.

4. *The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying are:*

The class teacher,

The relevant LSRT Teacher,

The assistant principal, Mrs Deirdre Rutledge,

Deputy principal, Mrs Ann Murrphy,

Principal, Ms. Catherine Mc Hale.

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) will be as follows:

- A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.
- 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 by way of prevention and intervention.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parent(s)/guardian(s) are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school

Creation of a culture of "telling".

• Teachers will repeatedly reinforce the message that if anyone is the victim of bullying behaviour, they should not retaliate in any way, but they should tell an adult. Victims will be reassured that if they tell, something will be done about the bullying in a safe manner and all reported incidents will be dealt with. It will 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.

- Class lessons to be provided to enable pupils "who to tell and how to tell" e.g.
 1. Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
 2. Hand note up with homework.
 3. Make a phone call to the school or to a trusted teacher in the school.
 4. Worry box
 5. Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
 6. Administer confidential questionnaires
- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Bystanders can be the key to resolving bullying and if anyone witnesses bullying behaviour, they should always tell a teacher. This is not telling tales but a means of protecting victims.

Raising the awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour by -

- Displaying our school's Anti-Bullying code ("Bullying is wrong. Treat others the way that you would like to be treated yourself") in homework notebooks and displaying it in school corridors, classrooms and other prominent places around the school environment.
- Engaging in formal teaching within the class setting through SPHE and RE programmes. (What is bullying? What is not bullying? What to do if you feel you are being bullied? What to do if you see somebody else being bullied?)
- Having a Multi- Cultural/ International day
- Creating an annual awareness week and friendship week for school community (pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community) about bullying. This will involve discussion, anti- bullying games, poster/slogan competitions, bullying surveys for classes 3rd-6th.
- Provision of information on all aspects of bullying

Other strategies

- Formal programmes of work are a vital element in raising children's self-esteem and equipping children to cope with bullying behaviour e.g. Walk Tall, RSE, Alive-O, Webwise, Stay safe, Zippy's Friends
- Positive reinforcement and rewarding incidents of good and improved behaviour, acts of kindness by teachers in classroom setting e.g. (Class dojo, Students of the week, Golden time, spot prizes, stars, stickers etc.)
- Modelling of respectful behaviour and language by teachers and staff.
- Encouraging students to look out for each other and to be responsible for their own behaviour.
- Involvement of the pupils in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Buddy system/ Lunchtime Pals that can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra- curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged also to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.
- Immediate affirmation of children who report incidents of bullying which they have witnessed.
- Each class to have a set of class rules which complements the school's Code of Behaviour.
- The development of an 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 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. 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 :

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring an alleged bullying incident to any teacher in the school.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of alleged bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers, must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;
 - When it is alleged that a pupil is being bullied, the class teacher will investigate. 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.

• It will 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.

Incidents of alleged 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 it is alleged that a pupil is being bullied, the class teacher will investigate. 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.
- 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).
- The teacher will 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 devoid of emotional or judgemental language.
- It may be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s)
- 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.
- 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 must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues.
- If and when the relevant teacher deems the incident to be a confirmed case of bullying the parents will be informed and the actions being taken will be explained.
- The child(ren) involved will be asked to sign "Pupil Behaviour Promise 1".
- It will 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;

Stage 2

If the child breaks their promise and re-offends then the Deputy Principal or Assistant 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 the promise 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.
- If the re-offence occurs within 20 school days of the previous incident the relevant teacher must use the recording template at Appendix 3 to record the bullying behaviour.
- Cases of gross bullying behaviour must proceed directly to stage 2 and be recorded and reported immediately to the principal or deputy principal.
- Parents and pupils are required to co-operate 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.

Stage 3

If a child breaks their promise twice then the matter is referred to the Principal. The Principal meets with the child and the parent. The child may be suspended for up to 3 days. The Principal has the permission of the Board of Management to suspend for up to 3 days.

Follow- up & Monitoring:

After each of the stages 1, 2 & 3 the teacher will take the following factors into account in order to monitor the situation

- 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
 - 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.
 - 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.
 - 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.

Recording of incidents:

- All incidents will be logged by the class teacher.
- As mentioned in Stage 2, incidents which have not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days will be recorded by the class teacher on the recording template as in Appendix 3 (Anti bullying Procedures for Primary and Post -Primary Schools). This template will be completed in full and a copy given to the Deputy Principal and Principal.
- Cases of gross bullying behaviour must proceed directly to stage 2 and be recorded and reported immediately to the principal or deputy principal.
- When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal or Deputy Principal as applicable. It should also be noted that the timeline for recording bullying behaviour in the recording template does not in any way preclude the relevant teacher from consulting the Principal or Deputy Principal at an earlier stage in relation to any case.
- At least once every school term the Principal will provide a report to the BOM setting out the overall number of bullying cases reported by means of this template and confirmation that all cases are being dealt with in accordance with procedure.

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

Pupils who are affected by bullying are reassured from the outset that they are not to blame.

All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience e.g.

- Buddy / Peer mentoring system ,
- Group work such as circle time

If pupils require counselling or further supports the school will recommend appropriate agencies. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.

Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

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. 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.

10. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 28/092021 [date].

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and 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 (or where none exists, be otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) 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: 

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: 

(Principal)

Date: 28/09/2021

Date of next review: Sept 2022