



St Laurence's National School, Chapelizod

Anti-Bullying Policy

October 2021

Introduction

The St. Laurence'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).

Every report of bullying is treated seriously and dealt with, having due regard for the wellbeing of the targeted pupil(s) and the perpetrator(s). The immediate priority, should a bullying incident occur, is ending the bullying and restoring the relationships insofar as is practicable.

All pupils are expected to contribute to the creation and maintenance of a safe environment in school. On becoming aware of a bullying situation, in or outside the school, involving members of the school community they should notify a trusted responsible adult.

Bullying behaviour is taken seriously always and must be reported.

1. Anti-Bullying Policy

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. Laurence's N.S. 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. Best Practice - prevention and tackling bullying behaviour

It is the school's priority to create a positive school culture and climate and ensuring the consistency of this will be an ongoing consideration and area of discussion for staff and management.

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:

- In line with our ethos, creating a positive school culture and climate which-
- Is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity- use of resources such as the INTO LGBT+ 'Different Families, One Love' lessons, having a bi-annual multi-cultural day in school etc.
- Encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
- Promotes respectful relationships across the school community:- Eg. Buddy Bench for pupils in yard
- Models respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times and build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils.
- 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-
- Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- and
- Explicitly address the issues of cyber- bullying and identity- based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying. 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.
- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.
- Support the establishment and work of senior pupils in collaboration with the principal (in place of a student council)
- Adequate and effective supervision and monitoring of pupils at all times;
- All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- 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.

3. What is bullying?

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 one-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. Staff with responsibility for investigating and dealing with bullying

- Ms Karen Hendy
- Ms Máirín O'Shea (Acting Dep Principal Richard Meaney for school year 2021/ 2022)

5. Education and Prevention Strategies

Creation of a culture of "telling".

- Teachers should 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 should 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.
- Class lessons to be provided to enable pupils "how to tell" (telling protocol)
- 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 the school's anti-bullying statement (Bullying is wrong and is not tolerated in St. Laurence's National School) in the school foyer and other prominent places around the school environment.
- Engaging in formal teaching within the class setting through SPHE and RE programmes.
- Creating an annual awareness week for school community about 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, Follow Me, Webwise and Stay Safe.
- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines. Rewarding incidents of good and improved behaviour and showing acts of kindness at class level and whole-school.
- Positive reinforcement by teachers in classroom setting (Class dojo, Students of the week (Proud Cloud), Golden time, Green Cards, stars, stickers etc.) Catch them being good - notice

and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.

- 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.
- 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, 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 eating lunch in their classrooms.
- All teachers are required to be vigilant on yard duty- record all incidences- monitor repeat offenders.
- Immediate affirmation of children who report incidents of bullying which they have witnessed.
- Circle-time sessions, role-play, Socially Speaking programs and puppetry are methodologies which are used to discuss and explore issues of bullying.
- Each class to have a set of class rules which are compliment the school's Code of Behaviour Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.
- Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules. Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- Renew the signs around the school. Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.
- Ensure supervision at all times when pupils can access the internet.
- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.
- Actively involve parents and/or the Parents’ Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media.
- Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use.
- Sanctions for unauthorised use of the internet/electronic devices will be imposed as per the Code of Behaviour and AUP.

- All teachers to do a lesson on internet safety- coincide with Internet Safety Day.
- Teachers' social media accounts should be private.

6. Procedures for Investigation, Follow Up and Recording of Bullying Behaviour

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.
- 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 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 judgmental 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 child/ children involved will be asked to sign "Pupil Behaviour Promise 1".

Stage 2

If this child breaks 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 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 co-operate with any investigations 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.
- 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 the matter is referred to the Principal. The Principal meets with the child and the parent and the child may be suspended for up to 3 days. The Principal will seek the permission of the Board of Management to suspend for up to 3 days.

Recording of incidents

All incidents will be logged by class teacher and 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. 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 procedures. This is in line with *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013)*.

The Board of Management will annually review this policy and its implementation.

7. School's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying

Victims

- Victims are reassured from the outset that they are not to blame.
- Strategies for restoring self-esteem are explored between teacher and parents/guardians.
- 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).
- The parents of the pupils concerned will be advised to contact the local Gardai if appropriate.

Bullies

- Where deemed necessary, the child in consultation with parents may be referred for counselling. They may need to learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others. Empathy awareness needs to be developed.
- Clinical referral and assessment may be necessary.
- Staged approach - class support, school support (as per Continuum-Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties- NEPS)

Incidents of bullying can extend beyond the school and the journey to and from school is one which can provide particular opportunities for bullying to occur. The school's policy could be given to those who are closely involved at this stage so that if bullying behaviour is witnessed by them, that they may report it to the school.

In certain cases too it may be necessary to invite assistance from formal agencies such as Gardai, (J.L.O) Health Board, Local Youth Groups etc.

The school will constantly remind parents of the dangers of "cyber- bullying" as can happen with the use of social networking sites and mobile phones. We also direct their attention to the school's internet Acceptable Use Policy (AUP).

The school cannot be responsible for disagreements between pupils that happen outside the school grounds but will make reasonable efforts to cooperate with parents in assisting them to resolve the issues.

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. Bullying by Adults

In the case of **intra- staff bullying**, St. Laurence's N.S. will adopt the procedures outlined in Section C (c2) of the I.N.T.O. booklet 'Working Together: Procedures and Policies for Positive Staff Relations.'

In the case of **Teacher- Child bullying**, a complaint should in the first instance be raised with the teacher in question by the parent/ guardian of the child, if possible and then if necessary to the principal. Where it is not possible to agree a framework for resolution, the matter should be referred in writing by both parties to the Board of Management for investigation.

In the case of **Parent- Teacher bullying**, the principal should be informed in the first instance, and if deemed necessary the Board of Management should subsequently be informed in writing.

In the case of **Parent/ Visitor to the school- Child bullying**, the complaint should be referred in the first instance to the child's class teacher and subsequently to the principal if unresolved.

In the case of **Principal- Parent/ Child bullying**, the matter should be raised with the principal if possible, or referred to the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

11. Ratification of Policy

This policy was reviewed by the Board of Management on _____ (date).

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

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.

Signed: _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: _____

Signed: _____
Principal

Date: _____

Date of next review: January 2022

Appendix 1: Template for recording bullying behaviour

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name: _____ Class: _____

2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behavior

3. Source of bullying concern/report

(TICK RELEVANT BOX(ES))

Pupil concerned	
Other pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

4. Location of incident(s)

(TICK RELEVANT BOX(ES))

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School bus	
Other	

5. Name(s) of person(s) who reported the bullying concern

6. Type of bullying behavior (tick relevant box(es))

Physical aggression		Cyber-bullying	
Damage to property		Intimidation	
Isolation/exclusion		Malicious gossip	
Name calling		Other (specify)	

7. Where behavior is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of traveler community	Other (Specify)

8. Brief description of bullying behavior and its impact

9. Details of actions taken

Signed: _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date: _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal: _____

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.

	Yes/No
Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools</i> ?	
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?	

Signed: _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: _____

Signed: _____
Principal

Date: _____

Appendix 3: Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the anti-bullying policy

To: _____

The Board of Management of St Laurence's National School wishes to inform you that:

- The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of _____ [date].
- This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in **Appendix 4** of the Department's *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Signed: _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: _____

Signed: _____
Principal

Date: _____

Appendix 4: Pupil Behaviour Promise

Pupil name: _____ **Class:** _____

I know that all of my fellow pupils are different from each other and from me in many ways. I would not like to be treated unfairly and made to feel bad by any of my fellow-pupils because of any of these differences, or because they did not like me.

I know I have a right to be different from other pupils and that this does not give anyone the right to treat me unfairly or to be mean to me. I know I should be treated fairly, equally and respectfully in school because of the school's Code of Behaviour.

I also know that all other pupils should be treated fairly, equally and respectfully. It is wrong to treat anyone in any other way. I, therefore, promise that in future I will treat all my fellow-pupils fairly, equally and respectfully despite our differences and whether I like them or not.

In particular, (Handwrite below, "I will always treat (N) fairly and respectfully").

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Pupil

Signed: _____ Date: _____
Teacher