

## 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 Laurence'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 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;
  - 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 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); 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 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.

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*:

### **Cyber Bullying is the use of ICT to abuse another person**

- It can take place anywhere and involve many people. Anybody can be targeted including school staff and pupils.
- It can include threats, intimidation, harassment cyber-stalking, vilification, defamation, exclusion, peer rejection, impersonation, unauthorised publication of private information or images etc.
- In the context of these procedures placing once-off offensive or hurtful public messages, images or statements 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.

### **Procedures for preventing Cyber-bullying:**

- Staff, pupils, parents and BoM will be made aware of issues surrounding cyber bullying through the use of appropriate awareness raising exercises.
- Pupils will learn about cyber bullying through Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), assemblies and other curriculum projects.
- The school will engage a speaker to facilitate a workshop on cyberbullying for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> classes annually. Classes 1st to 6<sup>th</sup> may participate in the "Bullying in a Cyber World" Programme.
- Parents will be provided with information and advice on how to combat cyber bullying.
- Pupils will sign an Acceptable Use of ICT contract.
- Parents will be expected to sign the Acceptable Use of ICT contract prior to enrolment and to discuss its meaning with their children.
- Pupils and parents will be urged to report all incidents of cyber bullying to the school. The reports of cyber bullying will be investigated, recorded, stored in the Principals office and monitored regularly.
- Procedures in our school Anti-Bullying Policy shall apply to the above.
- The police will be contacted in cases of actual or suspected illegal content
- This policy will be reviewed annually. Pupils, parents and staff will be involved in reviewing and revising this policy and any related school procedures.

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows: (see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):
  - The Principal, Mrs Catherine Coveney
  - Special Duties Teacher with responsibility for Discipline, Ms Colette Langan
  - Deputy Principal , Mrs Carol Mooney
  - Class Teacher of child being bullied
  - All other teaching and non-teaching staff members.
5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber- bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows (see Section 6.5 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):

**The School promotes the following principles:**

- A culture of inclusivity and respect,
- Positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among all its members
- A culture where pupils are comfortable reporting incidents of bullying to any member of staff, in the full knowledge that it will be acted upon.
- The school takes particular care of "at risk" pupils and uses its monitoring systems to facilitate early intervention where necessary and it responds to the needs, fears or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner. Staff members share a collegiate responsibility, under the direction of the Principal, to
- Acting to prevent bullying/aggressive behaviour by any member of the school community.
- **Strategies:**
  - Teachers can act as role models in how they treat their colleagues, promoting a culture of inclusion and respect by treating others respectfully, accepting differences and treating others equally
  - Effective practice includes prevention and awareness raising measures across all aspects of bullying and involves strategies to engage pupils in addressing problems when they arise. To this end in 4<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> classes all pupils shall participate in the Sticks and Stones Programme. In addition the members of the Community Gardai shall be invited to speak to classes from 2nd class upwards in matters relating to bullying.
  - The school will provide pupils with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth. Initiatives and programmes focused on developing pupils' awareness and understanding of bullying, including its causes and effects, should deal explicitly with the issue of identity-based bullying and in particular homophobic and transphobic bullying. To this end all pupils in Senior Infants, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> classes shall participate in the Stay Safe Programme.
  - Prevention and any awareness raising measures should focus on educating pupils on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while on-line and also on developing a culture of reporting any concerns about cyber-bullying. In September of each school year all pupils and their

parents are required to complete a contract regarding the proper useage of online computers in school.

- The school's approach to tackling and preventing bullying takes particular account of the needs of pupils with disabilities or with SEN, emphasising inclusion, promoting a school culture of inclusiveness and self respect for all, helping others particularly when transitioning from primary to secondary school. Children with Special Needs and all junior infant classes are included in a Buddy system which encourages inclusion in the school community.
- The provision of good and effective supervisory systems will operate in the school in order to monitor pupils and their behaviour and to prevent and deal with bullying behaviour.

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 (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*)

- 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);
- 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;
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. 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;
- 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;
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents;
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner;
- If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements;
- 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 should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied. 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;

- 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. This can have a therapeutic effect;
  - 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.
  - 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:
    1. Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
    2. Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable
    3. Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable.
    4. Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal;
  - 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 procedures**;
  - 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. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*) :

#### **Programmes of Support:**

The School's Programmes of Support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:

#### **Bullied Pupils:**

- Ending the bullying behaviour.
- Changing the school culture to foster more respect for bullied pupils and all pupils.
- Changing the schools culture to foster greater empathy towards and support for bullied pupils.
- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the awareness-raising programme.
- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the speedy identification of those responsible, and speedy resolution of bullying situations.
- After resolution, enabling bullied pupils to complete a victim-impact statement.

- Making adequate counselling facilities available to pupils who need it in a timely manner.
- Helping bullied pupils raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills (eg participating in group work in class and in extra-curriculum group or team activities during or after school).
- Implementing a “buddy system” in school.

### **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 shown the right thing and giving them praise for this.
- Making adequate counselling facilities available to help those who need it.
- Helping those who need it to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills.
- Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils’ feelings of self-worth.
- In dealing with negative behaviour in general, encouraging teacher and parent to focus on challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child.
- In dealing with bullying behaviour, seeking reconciliation 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. 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 \_\_\_\_\_

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents’ Association (where one exists). 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 (where one exists). A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of next review: \_\_\_\_\_