

St. Mary's National School
Belmont Ave, Donnybrook, Dublin 4
and
Mount Eden Road, Donnybrook, Dublin 4
Tel: 01 2195734 email: office@saintmarys.ie

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. Mary's NS** 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;

In St. Mary's NS we consider the following to be key elements of a Positive School Culture:

- We acknowledge the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment
- We acknowledge the uniqueness of each individual and their worth as a human being
- We promote positive habits of self- respect, self -discipline and responsibility among all its members.
- We actively prohibit vulgar, offensive, sectarian or other aggressive behaviour by any members of the school community.
- We have a clear commitment to promoting equality in general and gender equality in particular in all aspects of its functioning
- We have the capacity to change in response to our pupils needs

- We identify aspects of the school curriculum through which positive and sustainable influences can be exerted towards forming pupils attitudes and values
- We seek to identify needs of and facilitate early intervention for 'at risk' pupils in a sensitive manner.
- St. Mary's NS recognises the need to work in partnership with and keep parents informed on procedures to improve relationships within the school community
- We recognise the right of parents to share in the task of equipping pupils with a range of life skills.
- We recognise the role of other community agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying
- We promote habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the interdependence of people in groups and communities
- We promote qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among members of the school community
- Staff members share a collegiate responsibility, under the direction of the Principal, to act in preventing bullying/aggressive behaviour by ANY MEMBER of the school community

(b) Effective leadership

- The Board of Management has overall responsibility to ensure that this policy is effective, sustainable and measured. The Board will be made aware of alleged bullying incidents by way of the Principal's Child Protection Oversight Report which is presented at each Board of Management meeting. The Board of Management will conduct an annual review of the Anti-bullying Policy.
- The In-school Management Team (Marita Keenan, Aoife O' Sullivan, Fiona Murphy and Margot D'Arcy) has a clear role to act in a leadership capacity within the school community, stimulating a whole school approach to preventing and tackling bullying – and modelling best practice
- The Principal of St. Mary's, as key leader, strongly influences attitudes and sets standards in relation to dealing with bullying
- Teachers must act as good role models and not misuse authority, but be fair, clear and consistent in their disciplinary measures.

(c) A school-wide approach

- A whole community approach to the problem of bullying is required and St. Mary's NS School community comprises of management, teachers, non-teaching staff, pupils, parents/guardians
- Beyond the school community, bullying behaviour may extend to outside of school. Where this negatively impacts on a school - parents and pupils have a responsibility to support the school in helping to address the issue. This applies particularly (but not exclusively) to cyber bullying.
- The assistance of Gardaí, Tusla and Community Workers may be required in some cases
- Collective vigilance is needed throughout the whole school/community sector to identify and deal with issues around bullying in a fair and equitable manner
- We recognise that bullying can happen anywhere
- We recognise that any individual can be the victim or perpetrator of bullying behaviour.
- We foster positive attitudes and respect among the whole school community in an effort to prevent bullying behaviour
- We learn how to deal with situations through SPHE
- We encourage everyone to look for the good in others and to appreciate that we are all different

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

- St. Mary's NS endeavours to put in place appropriate systems to ensure that ALL relevant members of the school community (parents, pupils, staff and the wider community) have a shared understanding of what constitutes bullying behaviour as defined in this policy (*Section 2&3 of Anti Bullying Procedures for Primary & Post Primary Schools*)

(e) Implementation of education and prevention strategies see section 5 of this policy, (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

- Staff members have a distinct responsibility to ensure that supervision of pupils in class is effective and consistent
- Supervision in playground areas must be managed and conducted effectively, with particular attention given to arrival & dismissal

(g) Supports for staff

- Regular discussion and review of policy and procedures is essential to support staff on a continuous basis
- All staff must have a uniform interpretation of what is expected in relation to bullying, how to identify possible bullying behaviours, how to manage disclosures and how to deal effectively with incidents of bullying within the classroom context
- Staff must be aware that supporting one another is a key aspect of prevention and new/inexperienced members of staff must be given every opportunity to discuss concerns and model best practice
- CPD in relation to Anti Bullying Strategies will be supported and encouraged for all members of 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.

Bullying Behaviours which the staff of St. Mary's NS has identified as relevant to our context:

<p>General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc. • Physical aggression • Damage to property • Name calling • Slagging • The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person • Offensive graffiti • Extortion • Intimidation • Insulting or offensive gestures • Deliberate facial expressions focused on a particular individual with the intention of causing hurt to that individual • Invasion of personal space • A combination of any of the types listed.
<p>Cyber</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denigration: Spreading rumors, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation • Harassment: Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual • Impersonation: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name • Flaming: Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight • Trickery: Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online • Outing: Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images • Exclusion: Purposefully excluding someone from an online group • Cyber stalking: Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Silent telephone/mobile phone call • Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls • Abusive text messages • Abusive email • Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/ Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles • Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures • Abusive posts on any form of communication technology
Identity Based Behaviours Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).	
Homophobic and Transgender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation • Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation • Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian...used in a derogatory manner • Physical intimidation or attacks • Threats
Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background • Exclusion on the basis of any of the above
Sexual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching • Harassment
Special Educational Needs, Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name calling • Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs • Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying • Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues. • Mimicking a person's disability • Setting others up for ridicule

4. The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying in accordance with the Anti -Bullying Procedures for Primary & Post Primary Schools are listed below:

- Class teacher deals with initial allegation/suspicion of bullying behaviour
- Principal: Where bullying behaviour is suspected by the class teacher, the principal will be informed

Note: The relevant teacher will normally be the class teacher

5. The following education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying) will be used by St. Mary's. (Ref: Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

Education and prevention strategies

School-wide approach

- 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 behaviour.
- 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.
- Bullying to be included on the agenda of Staff meetings to ensure that all members of staff develop an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it-prevention and intervention.
- Professional development needs are considered periodically with a view to assessing staff requirements through internal staff knowledge/expertise and external sources.
- Professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teachers.
- Raising awareness on all aspects of bullying across the whole school community.
- Supervision Policy and Acceptable Use Policy.
- Involvement of the Student Council in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Mentoring, modelling behaviour, fostering a culture of inclusion and respect and other student support activities that can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- Development and promotion of a Friendship and Inclusivity Code for the school-to be displayed publicly in classrooms and in common areas of the school.
- The school's Anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parents/guardians are encouraged to view the given policy on the school website. The implementation of an annual Friendship Week (Term 1), Well-being Week (Term 2) and Resilience Week (Term 3).
- Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. 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.
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.:
 - Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
 - Hand note up with homework.
 - Make a phone call to the school
 - Get a parent/guardian or friend to tell on your behalf.
 - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Identify clear protocols to encourage parents/guardians to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied.
- School-wide awareness of the Acceptable Use Policy ratified by the Board of Management.

- The listing of supports currently being used in the school and the identification of other supports available to the school.

Implementation of curricula

- The full implementation of the *SPHE, RSE* and *Stay Safe* Programmes.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes.
- The school will consider the most appropriate resources to support the delivery of lessons relating to **Relational aggression, Cyber Bullying, Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying, Diversity and Inter-culturalism**, in accordance with the Catholic ethos of the school.
- 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.
- The school will consider the implementation of advice in "Sexual Orientation advice for schools".

Links to other policies

Hereunder is a list of school policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to bullying:

- Code of Behaviour
- Child Protection Policy
- Supervision of Pupils Policy
- Acceptable Use Policy
- SEN Policy
- Health & Safety Policy
- Attendance Strategy
- Sporting Activities
- Extra-Curricular Activities
- School Tours

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 must be consistent with the following approach.

Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parents/guardians) understand this approach from the outset.

Reporting bullying behaviour

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian may bring a bullying incident to the attention of 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 e.g. school secretary, Special Needs Assistants, caretaker and cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;

Investigating and dealing with incidents

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the relevant teacher will exercise her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
- The relevant teacher may discuss with or seek advice from the Principal/Deputy Principal in relation to the alleged bullying;
- Parent(s)/guardian 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.
- Where possible incidents should be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
- All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way;
- 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;
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after the interview by the teacher;
- It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s)
- Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide useful information and will be expected to assist the investigation. All bystanders have a responsibility to report bullying.

Dealing with Bullying Behaviour

In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the Principal will be informed and Stage 1 from the school's Anti-bullying Policy will be initiated.

Stage 1

- The pupil who has engaged in bullying behaviour will be asked to reflect on his/her behaviour. It will be made clear to the alleged bully that he/she is in breach of the school's Anti-bullying Policy. The alleged bully will be asked to reflect on the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
- The parent(s)/guardian of the alleged bully will then be contacted to inform them that following investigation their child has been found to be in breach of the School's Anti-bullying Policy. The parent will be requested to come to the school and discuss the matter with the class teacher and Principal with a view to resolving the issue.
- The parent(s)/guardian of the pupil who allegedly has been bullied will be contacted and advised that the bullying behaviour is being dealt with in accordance with the school's Anti-bullying Policy.
- The school should give parent(s)/guardian an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the pupils;
- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to the pupil how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy
- The pupil who has been found to be in breach of the Anti-Bullying Policy will be asked to reflect on the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied and asked to apologise.
- The pupils and parents/guardians involved in this matter will be informed of the sensitive and confidential nature of the matter and the necessity to protect the rights of all concerned.

Follow up

The situation will continue to be monitored to ensure that the problem has been resolved. Actions taken will be recorded. In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of 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 parent(s)/guardians 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 is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian must be referred, as appropriate, to the CPSMA Complaints Procedures.
- In the event that a parent(s)/guardian has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent(s)/guardian of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Recording of bullying behaviour

It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner.

The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

Informal- pre-determination that bullying has occurred

- If a member of staff witnesses or is notified of an alleged bullying incident, he/she will inform the relevant teacher who will use his/her professional judgement and act accordingly.
- If the alleged behaviour is occurring on yard, the class teacher will ask the teacher on Yard duty to note any relevant observations on the Yard Duty Observation Report.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
- The relevant teacher will use his/her professional judgement in deciding whether to note/record a report of an alleged bullying incident.

Formal Stage 1-determination that bullying has occurred

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

Formal Stage 2-Appendix 3 (From DES Procedures)

The relevant teacher must use the recording template attached to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

- a) In cases where he/she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred; and
- b) All confirmed instances of bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

The recording template must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal.

Teachers' records are retained in a secure space in the teachers' classrooms. All report templates given to the Principal will be retained securely in the Principals Office.

Established intervention strategies

- Teacher interviews with all pupils
- Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process
- Working with parent/guardian to support school interventions
- Circle Time
- Restorative Practice
- Implementing questionnaires

The Procedures mention the following intervention strategies and reference Ken Rigby;

The staff of St. Mary's NS is committed to exploring these interventions should the need arise:

- The traditional successful disciplinary approach
- Strengthening the victim
- Mediation
- Restorative Practice

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

(Ref 6:8:16 of Procedures):

- 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.

- SPHE Lesson
 - Stay Safe Programme
 - Walk Tall
 - NEPS programmes:
 - <https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/FRIENDS-Programmes.pdf>
 - <https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/Incredible-Years-TCM-Programme.pdf>
 - Friendship Week, Well-being Week and Resilience Week
 - Group work such as circle time
 - Encourage children to engage in extra-curricular activities
- If pupils require counselling or further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. NEPS will also be contacted for advice

8. Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils

The Board of Management has adopted this policy with the intention that the Supervision Policy and the Acceptable Use Policy 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 at a meeting held on _____.

11. This policy is published on the school website. The policy was submitted to the Parents' Association and The Student Council for comments before its ratification by the Board. 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 and be 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)

Date: 23/4/24
approved 2019

Signed: 
(Principal)

Date: 23/04/2024

St. Mary's National School
Belmont Ave
and
Milltown Park, Sandford Rd, Ranelagh, Dublin 6

YARD DUTY OBSERVATION REPORT

A Mhúinteoirí,

Please note briefly your observations, if any, of _____'s
behaviour (student's name) in _____ class (Class teacher's name)
on the yard during your Yard Duty Roster.

BREAK TIME COMMENTS:

LUNCH TIME COMMENTS:

Síniú an Mhúinteora: _____

Dáta: _____

Appendix 3 Template for recording bullying behaviour

(Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools)

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name _____ Class _____

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

3. Source of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es))

Pupil concerned	<input type="checkbox"/>	Parent	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Pupil	<input type="checkbox"/>	Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>		<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))

Playground	<input type="checkbox"/>	Corridor	<input type="checkbox"/>	School Bus	<input type="checkbox"/>
Classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>	Toilets	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es))

Physical aggression	<input type="checkbox"/>	Intimidation	<input type="checkbox"/>	Isolation/Exclusion	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cyber-bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>	Damage to property	<input type="checkbox"/>	Malicious gossip	<input type="checkbox"/>
Name calling	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>		

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

Homophobic Disability/SEN related Racist Membership of Traveller community Other (specify)

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

9. Details of actions taken

Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____