

ST. LAURENCE'S NATIONAL SCHOOL
SALLINS

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, Sallins 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.

See Appendix 1 for additional information.

4. The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:

- a. Class teacher
- b. Teacher on Yard Duty
- c. Deputy Principal
- d. Principal

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:-

- Developing an understanding within the children of what bullying is, the effects of bullying on others and how the school deals with bullying.
- Opportunities provided for the children to develop a positive sense of self through curricular and extra-curriculum programmes. An attitude of respect for all will also be fostered through the various curricular areas, promoting the value of diversity, addressing prejudice and stereotyping and highlighting the unacceptability of bullying.
- The use of a number of curricular programmes and initiatives relevant to the prevention of bullying and the promotion of diversity and inclusiveness – SPHE curriculum, Walk Tall, Stay Safe, Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE), Friends for Life (NEPS), talks for parents organised by Parents' Council.
- Cyber-bullying – educating children on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe online and developing a culture of reporting any concerns about cyber-bullying.
- Taking into account the needs of pupils with disabilities or with SEN. Approaches to decreasing the likelihood of bullying for pupils with SEN include improving inclusion, focusing on developing social skills, paying attention to key moments such as transitioning from primary to post-primary and cultivating a good school culture which has respect for all.

6. The school's procedure for investigating, 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:-

- 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 apportion blame).
- When a report of bullying is received, initially the class teacher will investigate.
- 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.
- 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.
- As parents/guardians have sole responsibility for their children outside of school hours, incidents of bullying including cyber bullying, can only be investigated where it is determined that it is impacting on pupil(s) at school.
- Parents are reminded that children must be at least thirteen years or older before creating a social network account.
- Incidents of bullying are generally best 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.
- If a group is involved, each member may be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. Each member will be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements.
- Where deemed necessary, pupils will be asked to write down their accounts of the incidents.
- The class teacher will keep a record of investigations/actions.
- Where the class teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, the Deputy Principal/Principal will be made aware of the situation.
- Where deemed necessary, the class teacher will meet the parents of the pupil(s) involved to explain the actions being taken.
- 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:-
 - i. whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
 - ii. whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
 - iii. whether the relationships between the parties involved, have been restored as far as is practicable
 - iv. 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.
- The investigating teacher must use the recording template at Appendix 2 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. where the school has decided as part of its anti-bullying policy that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.
- In each of the circumstances at (a) and (b) above, the recording template at Appendix 2 must be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal.
 - It should also be noted that the timeline for recording bullying behaviour in the recording template at Appendix 2 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.

7. Disciplinary Steps Stage I

- Bullies will be warned officially to stop offending.
- Efforts will be made to try to get the bully to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should be arranged separately with a view to bringing them together at a later date.
- Where the teacher *is not satisfied* that the bullying behaviour has ceased, s/he will refer the matter to the Deputy Principal/Principal.
- Deputy Principal/Principal will speak to the party (ies) involved.
- The parents of both parties may be required to attend a meeting with the Deputy Principal/Principal.

8. Disciplinary Steps Stage II

In situations where bullying is ongoing:-

- Parents may be asked to remove the offending child from the school playground at break times and also to escort them to and from school.
- If bullying persists, the child(ren) may be suspended for a temporary fixed period at the discretion of the Principal.
- In cases where the school has serious concerns in relation to managing the behaviour of a pupil, the advice of NEPS will be sought.
- Where the school authorities have deemed that the behaviour is potentially abusive, the HSE Children and Family Services will be consulted.
- Serious, isolated incidents of bullying behaviour must immediately be recorded in the relevant template Appendix 2 and reported to the Deputy Principal/Principal straight away.

9. Supports for pupils affected by bullying:-

- Pupils will be given opportunities to participate in activities to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship skills and in this way build resilience whenever this is needed – appropriate lessons in SPHE and Walk Tall.
- A programme of support for those pupils involved in bullying behaviour will be put in place. Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them to learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.

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

The pupil who has been bullied:

This involves discussing the incidents with pupils and reassuring them that they were correct to bring the incidents to the attention of staff. They will be given the opportunity to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience for whenever it is needed. If required, the pupil may need counselling.

The pupil involved in bullying behaviour:

This involves discussing the incidents with the pupil. The pupil will be given an opportunity to participate in activities designed to increase feelings of self-worth in those with low self-esteem. If required, the pupil may need counselling to learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.

The pupil who observed incidents of bullying:

This involves encouraging all pupils in the school to discuss incidents of bullying behaviour with the teacher.

11. The following programmes will be used to support pupils:

- The SPHE programme
- Relationships and Sexuality Education programme
- Walk Tall programme
- The Stay Safe Programme
- Friends for Life

11. The following agencies will be used to support pupil:

- NEPS
- Naas Child and Family.

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.

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.

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

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents Council. 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 _____
Michael Francis
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: _____
Noel Lanigan
Principal

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____

APPENDIX 1

Definition of bullying

- In the context of these procedures, bullying is defined as 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 this non-exhaustive definition:
 - 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.
- In addition, in the context of these procedures 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.
- 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 this definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour. A single incident can have a serious effect on a pupil and may also constitute harassment which is legally prohibited in schools under equality legislation. Harassment is any form of unwanted conduct related to any of the nine discriminatory grounds (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).

Types of bullying

The following are some of the types of bullying behaviour that can occur amongst pupils:

- **Physical aggression:** This behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While pupils often engage in 'mess fights', they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.
- **Intimidation:** Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation: it may be based on the use of very aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon. Particularly upsetting can be a facial expression which conveys aggression and/or dislike.

- **Isolation/exclusion and other relational bullying:** This occurs where a certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or all of the class group. This practice is usually initiated by the person engaged in bullying behaviour and can be difficult to detect. It may be accompanied by writing insulting remarks about the pupil in public places, by passing around notes about or drawings of the pupil or by whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard. Relational bullying occurs when a person's attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. One of the most common forms includes control: "Do this or I won't be your friend anymore" (implied or stated); a group ganging up against one pupil (girl or boy); non-verbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumours about a person or giving them the "silent treatment".
- **Cyber-bullying:** This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, e-mail, instant messaging (IM), apps, gaming sites, chat-rooms and other online technologies. Being the target of inappropriate or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying. As cyber-bullying uses technology to perpetrate bullying behaviour and does not require face to face contact cyber-bullying can occur at any time (day or night). Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyber-bullying. For example, a target may be sent homophobic text messages or pictures may be posted with negative comments about a person's sexuality, appearance etc.
- **Name calling:** Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) which hurts, insults or humiliates should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name-calling of this type refers to physical appearance, e.g. size or clothes worn. Accent or distinctive voice characteristics may attract negative attention. Academic ability can also provoke name calling. This tends to operate at two extremes. There are those who are singled out for attention because they are perceived to be weak academically. At the other extreme there are those, who, because they are perceived as high achievers, are also targeted.
- **Damage to property:** Personal property can be the focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, school books and other learning material or interference with a pupil's locker or bicycle. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.
- **Extortion:** Demands for money may be made, often accompanied by threats (sometimes carried out in the event of the targeted pupil not delivering on the demand). A pupil may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to another who is engaged in bullying behaviour.

APPENDIX 2

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

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

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

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

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

Physical Aggression	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cyber-bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>
Damage to Property	<input type="checkbox"/>	Intimidation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Isolation/Exclusion	<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 _____

Appendix 3 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 _____

Date _____

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _____

Date _____

Principal

Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the anti-bullying policy.

To: _____

The Board of Management of _____ 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 3** of the Department's *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Signed _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date _____

Signed _____
Principal

Date _____