



St. Olaf's NS 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. Olaf'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. Bearing the school mission statement in mind, the code of behaviour in St Olaf's school aims to have a code of behaviour that is underpinned by respect and kindness and enables staff and students to work together in harmony.

The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils. The school community believes strongly that respect for all must be promoted at all times and become intrinsic in the ethos of society. No bullying can therefore be tolerated. Discrimination based on the nine stated grounds included in equality legislation, i.e. gender including transgender; civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community, cannot be allowed.

Defining Bullying Behaviour

Everybody in St. Olaf's NS understands that there are lots of different ways that pupils can be bullied in school and that different people describe bullying in different ways. The Department of Education and Skills' Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (September, 2013) describes bullying as "unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated overtime" (p.39). They also say that bullying includes behaviours such as deliberate exclusion, nasty gossip, cyberbullying and bullying people because of their identity (who they are).

The points below are our definition or description of bullying:

- Bullying behaviours hurt and upset all those involved, but not everyone is upset in the same way.
- Bullying involves different types of actions including:



- Verbal actions (e.g. name calling and mocking/jeering)
- Gestures or signs (e.g. a nasty look)
- Physical actions (e.g. hitting and kicking)
- Taking or breaking other peoples' belongings
- Leaving people out of games, ignoring them or telling others not to play with them (these are types of exclusion) and spreading rumours about people
- Cyberbullying (e.g. bullying on the Internet and online, bullying by mobile phone, computer or games console or any electrical device)
- Bullying based on things like how you look, your religion or race, your family, gender and sexuality (identity-based bullying e.g., using the word gay as a mean word)
- Bullying behaviours can range from very serious cases where a child is at risk, to more minor incidents that can be resolved within the school
- Often bullying behaviours happen over time. Once-off or rare incidents, however, can have the same effect on those involved and might be the start of a bullying problem
- Some behaviours happen in private (e.g. being sent a nasty text or a note in class) and others happen in public in front of other people. Both of these types of behaviours can be upsetting and hurtful
- Bullying usually happens in the school but behaviours that happen outside (including online or by phone) that affect people in school will be considered bullying
- Bullying should not be confused with everyday quarrels or fights where all those involved are equally upset
- Isolated, rare 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

This is not a list of every type of bullying and it is important to remember that other things can happen in school that will upset people. Pupils, parents and staff should be encouraged to report all problems in the school. Bullying will be dealt with using this guide but other problems will be dealt with as part of the school's rules and guides on behaviour and safety.

The Board of Management and the staff of St. Olaf's NS are 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



- Fosters mutual and self-respect
- Raises awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour and encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment
- Promotes respectful relationships across the school community through school assemblies, Gratitude week and SPHE programmes such as Walk Tall and Stay Safe

(b) Effective leadership

- BOM – approves and reviews Anti Bullying Policies and involved in Step 4 of Procedures for Dealing with Incidents
- Principal - Overall responsibility for ensuring implementation of Anti Bullying Policy in the school (Involved directly from Step 2).
- Class Teachers - involved from Steps 1 - 4

(c) A school-wide approach

- The school acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment
- The school promotes positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among all its members

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

(e) Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that-

- Build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils
- Explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying;

(f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils

- All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour
- Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school, including language which is racist and homophobic or belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN
- Ensure that there is adequate yard supervision
- Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules
- Seek pupils' help to identify bullying 'hot spots' for bullying in the school.



- The school prohibits vulgar, offensive, sectarian or other aggressive behaviour or language by any of its members.

(g) Supports for staff

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

(i) On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

Established intervention strategies:

- The Stay Safe Programme
- Aistear
- SPHE
- RSE Programme
- Walk Tall Programme
- Internet Safety talk for pupils, staff and parents from Internet Safety company e.g. Zeeko, Webwise
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes covering issues around personal safety
- Other school policies relevant to bullying: Code of Behaviour, Child Protection policy, Internet Acceptable Use Policy
- 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(s)/guardian(s) to support school interventions
- No Blame Approach
- Circle Time

Procedures for Dealing with Incidents

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:



Step 1: The first step in the process allows the teacher to gather information about the incident. This might involve speaking with the pupil or pupils who have experienced the behaviours (without labelling them as victims of bullying), gathering information on who is involved (without labelling them as bullies), and recording any posts on the Internet, social media or mobile phones where applicable. The main task is to determine if the incident constitutes bullying as described in this policy.

Step 2: The incident has been confirmed as bullying and the class teacher and pupils are involved in dealing with the problem.

- From this point teachers are asked to keep a record of the incident and any strategies used to resolve the problem
- The principal is informed and may provide support to the teacher
- Parents of the pupils involved are informed by a phone call, that there has been an incident and the steps that are being taken to resolve the problem within the class. However they are not called to meet with the teacher
- If the incident involves the Internet or social media any relevant information or posts (text or photos) must be removed

Step 3: If the bullying continues, formal contact is made with the parents of the pupils involved and the incident is formally referred to the principal.

- The teacher and principal may meet with the parents separately to discuss the issue and possible solutions
- The teacher, principal, pupil(s) and parents work together to resolve the problem
- The teacher and principal continue to keep a formal record of steps taken to date (minutes of any meetings kept and the decisions taken)

Step 4: If the bullying continues in spite of the steps taken to resolve the problem the case is brought to the attention of the Board of Management in order to explore other options and to draw on the expertise of the board members.

Reporting bullying behaviour

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school



- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. 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;
- Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, SNAs, caretakers, cleaners and School Traffic Wardens are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

Procedures for recording bullying behaviour

The relevant teacher will use the recording template at Appendix B 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 B must be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable. It should also be noted that the timeline for recording bullying behaviour in the recording template at Appendix B 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.

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.



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 and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. 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 15/02/22.



Appendix B

Recording bullying behaviour form

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 4. Location of incidents

(tick relevant box(es))

Pupil concerned

Other pupil

Parent

Teacher

Yard

Classroom

Corridor

Toilets

Other

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

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

Physical Aggression Cyber-bullying

Damage to Property Intimidation

Isolation/Exclusion Other (specify)

Name Calling

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

Homophobic Disability/SEN related



Racist Membership of the 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 4 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 Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools?

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 Donal Rochford Date 21/02/22

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed John Murtagh Date 21/2/22

Principal

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

To: _____

The Board of Management of St Olaf's 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 11th February 2019

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 Donal Rochford Date 21/02/22

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed John Murtagh Date 21/02/22

Principal