



Anti-Bullying Policy

St. Oliver Plunkett School, Malahide

This Policy is directly informed by the Department of Education's *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary Schools*, published in 2013. While it was adapted to suit our particular school, the procedures outlined in the DES document are strictly adhered to. It was developed by staff members in consultation with the Parent's Association and the Student Council.

November 2021

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 Oliver Plunkett 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) 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;

See Table A (6.1.5. Procedures): Key elements of a positive school culture and climate, and also Appendix 2: Practical tips for building a school culture and climate.
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(b) Effective leadership

(c) A school-wide approach

(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; 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

(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.

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*.

Examples of bullying behaviours
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General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying	<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
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • The “look” • Invasion of personal space • A combination of any of the types listed.
Cyber	<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 • 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/snapchat/ 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

Relational	<p>This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malicious gossip • Isolation & exclusion • Ignoring • Excluding from the group • Taking someone's friends away • "Bitching" • Spreading rumours • Breaking confidence • Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear • The "look" • Use or terminology such as 'nerd' in a derogatory way
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 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 Relevant Teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying behaviour in this school are:

The class teacher will be the lead person in exploring and dealing with issues of bullying behaviour. It may be necessary for the Deputy / Principal to be involved, especially if there are many children to be interviewed.

Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

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 (see Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

The following are some of our education and prevention strategies
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- 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.
- Whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develops an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it-prevention and intervention.
- An annual audit of professional development needs 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 teacher(s)
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.
- Involvement of the student council in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Buddy system, mentoring, Lunchtime Pals and other student support activities that can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parent(s)/guardian(s) are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school (every year).
- The implementation of regular (e.g. per year/per term/per month/per week) whole school awareness measures e.g. a dedicated notice board in the school and classrooms on the promotion of friendship, and bullying prevention; annual Friendship Week and parent(s)/guardian(s) seminars; annual or term or monthly student surveys; regular school or year group assemblies by principal, deputy principal, teachers, students and guest speakers etc.
- 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 or to a trusted teacher in the school.
 - Anti-bully or ABC (a better community) box
 - Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
 - Administer a confidential questionnaire once a term to all pupils.
 - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.

- We have clear protocols to encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied.
- The development of an Acceptable Use Policy in the school which includes the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored, as is the pupils' use of mobile phones and other communication devices.
- The listing of supports currently being used in the school and the identification of other supports available to the school e.g., Restorative Practice

Curriculum Implementation

- The full implementation of the SPHE curriculum and the 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, e.g. Cool School Lessons, Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme, On My Own Two Feet.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying behaviour, different forms of bullying, the bystander, dealing with bullying behaviour, restorative practice and living restoratively.
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardaí, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying
- 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 implement the advice in "Sexual Orientation advice for schools" (RSE Primary, see booklet).

Links to other policies

In drawing up our AB Policy, we were cognisant of other policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to bullying. They include the following:

1. Code of Behaviour
2. Child Protections Policy
3. Acceptable Use Policy
4. Attendance Policy
5. Communication with Parents Policy
6. After school Activities Policy

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)

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, parent(s)/guardian(s)) understand this approach from the outset.

Reporting bullying behaviour

- Any person, pupil, parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to 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 such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), reading class taxi drivers, bus drivers, caretakers, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;

Investigating and dealing with incidents: Style of approach (see section 6.8.9)

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the relevant teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.
- Where possible incidents are investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved; we have arrangements in place to free up the relevant teacher to facilitate this.
- 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;
- We promote the restorative approach, and find that the restorative questions are very helpful in allowing children to see how their behaviour harms others and causes hurt.
- If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Prior to interview, they write their individual account of what happened. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member is 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;
- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the parties involved will be contacted to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy). The school will give parent(s)/guardian(s) 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;

- Parent(s)/guardian(s) 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;
- 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 how this behaviour has impacted others using age-appropriate language and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied, using the restorative questions
- It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parent(s)/guardian(s)) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school;
- Where possible, incidents are being investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved; this will inevitably impact on pupil teacher contact time

Follow up and recording

- 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:
 - 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)/guardian(s) or other members of the community
- 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(s) is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
- In the event that a parent(s)/guardian(s) has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) 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

- ✓ All incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by staff must be reported to the relevant teacher in a timely manner.
- While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher must keep a written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same
- The relevant teacher must inform the principal of all incidents being investigated.

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 his/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 at **Appendix 3** 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 Deputy Principal or Principal as applicable.
- The school should list behaviours that must be recorded and reported immediately to the principal. These should be in line with the school's code of behaviour.

When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the Deputy Principal. These records are stored securely in the DP's office.

Established intervention strategies

This is a menu of the interventions we use. Each case is unique and the intervention method chosen will reflect the age and maturity level of the pupils in question

- Teacher interviews with all pupils
- Shared Concern meetings
- 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)s to support school interventions
- Circle Time
- Restorative interviews
- Restorative conferencing
- Implementing sociogram questionnaires e.g those in the Continuum of Support
- Peer mediation where suitable training has been given

The Procedures mention the following intervention strategies and reference Ken Rigby;
[www.bullyingawarenessweek.org/pdf/BullyingPreventionStrategiesinSchools Ken Rigby.pdf](http://www.bullyingawarenessweek.org/pdf/BullyingPreventionStrategiesinSchools%20Ken%20Rigby.pdf)

- The traditional disciplinary approach
- Supporting the victim
- Mediation
- Restorative Practice
- The Method of Shared Concern
- Follow through with bystanders

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

(see Section 6.8.16 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools) :

- 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.
 - Pastoral care system
 - Buddy / Peer mentoring system
 - Care team / Student Support Team
 - Group work such as circle time
- If pupils require counselling of further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.
- Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

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 ____ November 2021____
[date].

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.

Signed: _____
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _____
(Principal)

Date: _____

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____

Appendix A

Allegation of bullying behaviour

Child/children alleged to be victims of bullying behaviour _____

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	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other(specify)	

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

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus/taxi	
Other (specify)	

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		Cyber-bullying	
Damage to Property		Intimidation	
Isolation/Exclusion		Malicious Gossip	

Name Calling		Other (specify)	
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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 reported behaviour

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9.Details of actions taken

Individual interviews		
Name of pupil	Date of interview	See appendix B

Contacted parents (please name)	Date

Interventions		Date /dates	Brief details
Circle of concern			
Restorative Conference			

Mediation			
*Disciplinary approach			
Other (specify)			
Follow through with bystanders			
Support for children involved			

Any further details:

*We would always encourage children to engage firstly with RP and mediation processes. In the event that a child will not cooperate, we will resort to a more traditional approach of school-imposed sanctions

Follow up meetings	Date

Any further details / comments

Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher)

Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____ (by email)

Appendix B

ABP St Oliver Plunkett School

What happened?
Where did this happen?
When did these incident / incidents happen?
Who was there?
Why do you think this happened?
Have you anything to add?

Pupil: _____ Teacher: _____ parent: _____

Date; _____

Appendix C

Q1. What happened?

Q2. What were you thinking at the time?

Q3. What have your thoughts been since?

Q4. Who has been affected and in what way?

Q5. What could you have done differently?

Q6. What needs to happen next?

Signed _____

Parent _____

Date _____

Appendix D to be used post 20 days if the behaviour has not ceased

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name _____ Class _____

2. Name and classes of pupils engaged in bullying behaviour

3. Source of concern/report

Tick relevant box(es)

4. Location of incidents

Pupil concerned	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Playground	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other pupil	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Corridor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Toilets	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	School bus	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (Specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Name of person who originally reported the bullying concern

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6. Type of bullying behaviour

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 the bullying behaviour is regarded as identity based, indicate the category

Homophobic	Disability SEN related	Racist	Membership of traveller community	Other (specify)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. Brief description of bullying behaviour and it's impact

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9. Details of actions taken

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Signed _____ (teacher) Date _____ Date sent to DP /Principal _____