



Sandford Parish National School

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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 Sandford Parish N.S. 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
- 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*.

4. Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

All alleged incidents of bullying behaviour will be investigated by the class teacher. The Principal/Deputy Principal may participate in any investigation or dealings with alleged incidents of bullying behaviour.

5. Education and Prevention Strategies

The following education and prevention strategies, at the appropriate and relevant level for each class, will be used by the school:

- Promoting the belief that every child should have a safe, happy and secure environment in which to perform their tasks. This is supported by our Code of Behaviour.
- Using curriculum opportunities to teach anti-bullying, for example, Religious Education, S.P.H.E., R.S.E., Stay Safe, Drama, and P.E.
- Fostering and enhancing 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 e.g. Circle Time, Stay Safe, Relationship and Sexuality Education and Social Personal and Health Education.
- Explicitly teaching pupils about the appropriate use of social media.
- Vigilance in supervising pupils by the teaching and non-teaching members of the community and encouragement of all in the community to report any bullying issues.
- Displaying key anti-bullying messages around the school.
- Explicitly teaching respectful language and behaviour and modelling of respectful behaviour to all members of the school community.
- Children will be encouraged to talk about incidents that they feel are damaging to their physical or mental well-being.
- Developing and displaying classroom rules that incorporate anti-bullying rules.

- Anti-bullying rules will be explicitly taught at classroom level and promoted at whole school level.
- Encouraging a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on bystander
- Experts in anti-bullying will visit the school to speak to children, teachers, and parents/guardians.
- Special allowance may be necessary regarding children with SEN (special educational needs).

The following signs and symptoms may suggest that a pupil is being bullied:

- Anxiety about travelling to and from school e.g. requesting parents/guardians to accompany the pupil, changing travel routes, avoiding regular times for travelling to and from school
- Unwillingness to go to school, refusal to attend, truancy.
- Deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school.
- Pattern of physical illness e.g., headaches, stomach aches.
- Unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour which may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or after longer school holidays.
- Visible signs of anxiety or distress e.g. stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, bedwetting
- Spontaneous, out-of-character comments about either pupils or teachers
- Possessions missing or damaged.
- Increased requests for money or stealing money.
- Unexplained bruising or cuts or damaged clothing.
- Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling the pupil.

6. Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

Class teachers are responsible for investigation, follow up and recording of bully behaviour as outlined in Section 4. The Principal/Deputy Principal may be involved at any/all stages.

The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:

- a. The primary aim for the relevant teacher in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame).
- b. In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise their professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
- c. 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.
- d. Non-teaching staff (e.g. secretaries, SNAs, caretaker etc) are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher/s.

- e. Parents/guardians 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.
- f. It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents/guardians) understand the above approach from the outset.
- g. Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents/guardians.
- h. Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- i. 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.
- j. 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 with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
- k. 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 their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements.
- l. Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher.
- m. It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s).
- n. In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher/s that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents/guardians of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken, by reference to the school policy. The school should give parents/guardians an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils.
- o. Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how s/he is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
- p. It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents/guardians) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents/guardians and the school.
- q. 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.
- r. In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred,

it must be recorded by the relevant teacher in the recording template (see Appendix 2).

- s. 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; and
 - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents/guardians or the school Principal or Deputy Principal.
 - Where a parent/guardian is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents/guardian must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
 - In the event that a parent/guardian has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents/guardians of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Procedures for Recording Bullying Behaviour:

The Board of Management will ensure that the school has clear procedures for the formal noting and reporting of bullying behaviour and are documented in the school's anti-bullying policy. All records will be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour will adhere to the following:

- (i) While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher/s, the relevant teacher/s will use his/her professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same
- (ii) If it is established by the relevant teacher/s that bullying has occurred, the 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
- (iii) The relevant teacher/s 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 relevant 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 does not in any way preclude the teacher from consulting the Principal or Deputy Principal at an earlier stage in relation to a case.

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

- a. If it is, following the procedures outlined in section 4, above, concluded that a pupil has been involved as a perpetrator of bullying behaviour, the perpetrator of the bullying behaviour should be encouraged to understand the impact that his/her behaviour has had on the target, and to try and see the situation from his/her point of view.
- b. In cases where bullying behaviour has occurred, teachers will meet with the parents/guardians of the parties involved as appropriate and will explain the actions being taken and the reasons for them. Ways in which they can reinforce or support these actions will be discussed.
- c. Where deemed appropriate, sanctions against those who have perpetrated bullying behaviour will be made.
- d. Follow-up interviews may be conducted with the parties involved, to review and evaluate progress.

Given the complexity of bullying behaviour, no one intervention/support programme works in all situations. Therefore, various approaches and intervention strategies may be used including suggesting that parents/guardians seek referrals so that appropriate outside agencies are contacted to receive further support for the pupils and their families if needed.

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 is available to school personnel and is available on the school's website. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and the patron if requested.

11. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management annually (see Appendix 3). Written notification that the review (see Appendix 4) has been completed will be made available to school personnel and be published on the school's website. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department of Education.

Appendix 1

Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate

The following are some practical tips for immediate actions that can be taken to help build a positive school culture and climate and to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour.

- Always model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community.
- Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.
- Catch them being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN.
- Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.
- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.
- Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use.
- Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.
- Actively involve parents/guardians and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media.
- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.
- Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.
- All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- Ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.
- School staff can get pupils to help them to identify bullying “hot spots” and “hot times” for bullying in the school.
 - Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas/home times, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision.
 - Hot times again tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when pupils are in the playground/school yard or moving classrooms.
- Support the establishment and work of student councils.

Suggested Education & Prevention Strategies

- 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.
- 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, 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 is available on the school's website.
- Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance by bystanders. In that way pupils will gain confidence in "talking". 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 a note up with homework
 - Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf
 - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- The development of an Acceptable Use Policy in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored, as is the pupils' use of mobile phones.



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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

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

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) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

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 of the parents' association? | |
| Has the Board ensured 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

Appendix 4

Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the Anti-Bullying Policy

To: _____

The Board of Management of Sandford Parish National School 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 _____.
- 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 _____ Date: _____

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _____ Date: _____

Principal

Please see the Department's Circular on Anti Bullying Procedures for Primary & Post Primary Schools 2013 for any additional information required.