




# Anti-Bullying Policy

## Introduction:


In accordance with the requirements of the Education Welfare Act 2000 and behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of St. Patrick's De La Salle B.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 which were published in September 2013.


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  
Promotes respectful relationships across the school community.
- **Effective leadership**
- **A school-wide approach**
- **A shared understanding of what bullying is and it's impact**
- **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.
- **Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils**
- **Supports for staff**
- **Consistent recording, investigation and follow up bullying established intervention strategies**
- **Ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy**

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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 education 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 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 Code of Behaviour.


Relevant personnel for dealing with bullying incidents:


The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are):

- The class teacher
- The principal
- The deputy principal
- Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant this.

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## Examples of bullying behaviours

<p><b>General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Harrassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation. Eg: sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying.</li> <li>- Physical Aggression</li> <li>- Damage to property</li> <li>- Name calling</li> <li>- Slagging</li> <li>- The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other material</li> <li>- Offensive graffiti</li> <li>- Extortion</li> <li>- Intimidation</li> <li>- Insulting or offensive games</li> <li>- The “Look”</li> <li>- Invasion of personal space</li> <li>- A combination of any of the types listed</li> </ul>
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<p><b>Cyber</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Denigration: Spreading rumours, lies or gossip to hurt a person’s reputation</li> <li>- Harassment: Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual</li> <li>- Impersonation: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person’s name</li> <li>- Flaming: Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight</li> <li>- Trickery: Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post</li> <li>- Outing: Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images</li> <li>- Exclusion: Purposefully excluding someone from an online group</li> <li>- Cyber stalking: Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his safety</li> <li>- Silent phonecalls</li> <li>- Abusive text messages</li> <li>- Abusive email</li> <li>- Abusive communication on social media or games consoles</li> <li>- Abusive website comments/blogs/pictures</li> <li>- Abusive posts to any form of communication technology</li> </ul>
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**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)

<p><b>Homophobic and Transgender</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Spreading rumours about someone’s sexual orientation</li> <li>- Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation</li> <li>- Name-calling: eg: gay, queer, lesbian used in a derogatory manner</li> <li>- Physical intimidation or attacks</li> <li>- Threats</li> </ul>
<p><b>Relational</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying</li> </ul> <p>Behaviours include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Malicious gossip</li> <li>- Isolation and exclusion</li> <li>- Ignoring</li> <li>- Excluding from the group</li> <li>- Taking someone’s friend’s away</li> <li>- Bitching</li> <li>- Spreading rumours</li> <li>- Breaking confidence</li> <li>- Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear</li> <li>- The “Look”</li> <li>- Use of terminology such as “nerd” in a derogatory way</li> </ul>
<p><b>Special Educational Needs, Disability, Neurodivergent person</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Name calling</li> <li>- Taunting other because of their disability or learning needs</li> <li>- Taking advantage of some pupil’s vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying</li> <li>- Taking advantage of some pupils’ vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues</li> <li>- Mimicking a person’s disability</li> <li>- Setting others up for ridicule</li> </ul>

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The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyberbullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:


## School – Wide Approach

- A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school and 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 extra curricular 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 develop an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on the lives of pupils 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, parents, guardians 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 information communication technology within the school.
- The school's anti bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parents/guardians are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school.
- Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of the role of the bystander. 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. Eg:
  - o Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time
  - o Hand note up with homework
  - o Make a phonecall to the school or to a trusted teacher in the school
  - o Get a parent/guardian or friend to tell on your behalf
  - o Administer a confidential questionnaire to all pupils
  - o Ensure that bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Identify clear protocols to encourage parents/guardians to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied.
- The development of an "Acceptable Use Policy" in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access of technology within the school is strictly monitored as is the pupils use of mobile phones.

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### Implementation of curricula:

- The full implementation of the SPHE and the RSE and the Stay Safe Programmes.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence-based programmes for example “Stay Safe”, “Walk Tall”.
- The school will specifically consider the additional needs of pupils with special educational needs with regards to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.

### Links to other policies:

The following school policies, practices and activities are particularly relevant to bullying:

- Code of Behaviour
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Statement and Risk assessment
- Supervision Policy
- Acceptable Use policy
- Attendance policy
- Sporting activities

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:

## Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

The primary aim of investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationship of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame).

The school’s procedure must be consistent with the following approach:


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


### Reporting Bullying Behaviour:

1. Any pupil or parent/guardian may bring a suspected bullying case to any teacher in the school.
2. All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
3. Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants, bus escorts caretaker, cleaners etc must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

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### Investigating and dealing with incidents: Style of approach:

- 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.
- 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.
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach
- Where possible, incidents should be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regards to the right 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 in a restorative manner;


### Restorative, No Blame approach to problem solving:

#### *Restorative Questions:*


- What happened?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- What have your thoughts been since?
- How have you been affected by what happened?
- Who has been affected by what happened?/by what you did?
- What has been the hardest thing for you?
- What do you think needs to happen next?


This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with conflict in a non-aggressive manner.

- If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements.
- It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident.
- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parent/guardian of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken. The school should give a parent/guardian an opportunity to discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the pupils.

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- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him how he is in breach of the School Anti Bullying Policy and efforts should be made to try to get him to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
- It must also be made clear to all involved, that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his parents/guardians and the school.

### Follow – Up and Recording:

In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addresses 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 parents/guardians or the school principal or deputy principal
- Follow up meetings with the relevant parties involved should be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.
- Where a parent/guardian is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, they will be referred as appropriate, to the school Parental Complaint Procedure.
- In the event that a parent/guardian has exhausted the school Parental Complaint Procedure and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent/guardian of their right to bring the complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

### Recording Bullying Behaviour:


It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner. The school procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:


#### **Informal: Pre-determination that bullying has occurred:**

- All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher.
- 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.

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## 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 the appropriate written records (Appendix 3) and use restorative practice which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

## Formal Stage 2 – Appendix 3

The relevant teacher should use the recording template Appendix 3 to record the bullying behaviour where it has been established that bullying has occurred. Please note the following:

- In very serious circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.
- When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal. It should also be noted that the relevant teacher may consult the principal/deputy principal at any stage of the process.
- In situations where the situation is serious and where the behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive, the school will consult TUSLA with a view seeking advice on making a mandated report.
- Serious incidents of bullying behaviour will, in accordance with the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools Revised 2023* be referred to TUSLA and/or the Gardaí s appropriate.

### *Established Intervention Strategies:*

- Teacher interviews with all pupils
- Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process.
- Working with parents/guardians to support school interventions
- No blame approach
- Restorative Circle
- Restorative Interviews
- Restorative Conferencing

## Support for pupils involved in bullying incidents

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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.

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

- Consultation with parents
- Specific lessons as part of in-class SPHE programme
- Access to Social Skills lessons from SET team
- Referral for therapeutic support (If pupils require counselling, the school will endeavour to direct parents/guardians towards appropriate supports).

## Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils


The Board of Management of St Patrick's De la Salle BNS 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.

- In accordance with the school Acceptable Use Policy, the following are addressed:
  1. All internet lessons supervised by the teacher
  2. The school regularly monitor students when they are engaged in online learning in school.


(Note that the school's broadband programme has blocked all social networking sites)


## Prevention of Harrassment

The Board of Management of St Patrick's De la Salle BNS confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under the 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; gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

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This policy was ratified and adopted by the Board of Management on 11th March 2024.


It has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website, and provided to the Parent's Association. A copy can be made available to the Department of Education and Bishop Niall Coll (Patron) where requested.

**The policy will be reviewed by the Board of Management annually in Term 2.** Written notification of review will be published on the school website.


*Signed:*


Olivia Coppinger  
*Chairperson*

*Date:* 11th March 2024

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