



Policy: Anti-Bullying

Ratified: November 19th 2024



St. Francis Junior School

Priorswood, Dublin

17 Roll No.

17104G

Anti-Bullying Policy

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the Code of Behaviour Guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of St. Francis' Junior 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 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 *involves collaboration among and between staff & pupils *promotes respectful relationships across the entire 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 cyberbullying 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 ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the antibullying policy.
3. In accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools bullying is defined as follows :

'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 do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of 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 and appears as an appendix in this document.

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:
 - The class teacher(s) / SEN teacher initially
 - The Principal / Deputy Principal thereafter if necessary
5. The following education and prevention strategies, at the appropriate and relevant level for each class, will be used by the school:
 - Prevention and awareness raising measures across all aspects of bullying and involves strategies to engage pupils in addressing problems when they arise. In particular, such strategies need to build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils
 - Provide pupils with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth

Prevention and awareness raising measures focusing on cyber-bullying by educating pupils on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while online.

The school has a Remote Teaching and Learning policy which aims to protect both staff and pupils/parents when using remote learning

- Teachers can influence attitudes to bullying behaviour in a positive manner
- There are a number of curriculum components and programmes which are particularly relevant to the prevention of bullying and the promotion of respect for diversity and inclusiveness. The SPHE curriculum makes specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the inter-related areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships. The Stay Safe and RSE programmes at primary level are personal safety skills programmes which seek to enhance children's self-protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying. The Alive-O programme teaches children to respect themselves and others. Various other social, health and media education programmes can further help to address the problem of bullying behaviour.
- The work could be extended into many other areas such as Art, Drama, Religious Education, Assembly and Physical Education. Co-operation and group enterprise can be promoted across all subjects
- Sporting activities in particular can provide excellent opportunities for channelling and learning how to control aggression.

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:

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). With this in mind the schools procedures are as follows:

- ❖ In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher(s) will exercise his-her/their professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred, what type if it has and how best the situation might be resolved
- ❖ All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher(s). 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 special needs assistants (SNAs), the secretary, caretaker, cleaners must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher
- ❖ Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible
- ❖ It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupil and parents) understand the above approach from the outset
- ❖ Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents
- ❖ Initial investigations of bullying will be done in class where possible but some incidents might be best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved
- ❖ All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way
- ❖ When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher(s) 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
- ❖ 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/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 interview by the teacher
- ❖ Where the relevant teacher(s) has/have 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 antibullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied

- ❖ It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s)
- ❖ In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher(s) that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents 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 parents 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
- ❖ It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school
- ❖ Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved may 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
- ❖ An additional follow-up meeting with parents of the children involved may take place after an appropriate time to ensure that the matter has been resolved satisfactorily
- ❖ Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures
- ❖ In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children

As part of the Action Plan on Bullying, the Bí Cineálta Procedures to Prevent & Address Bullying Behaviour for Primary & Post-Primary Schools have been released.

Circular 55/2024 provides details on changes and requirements.

These procedures replace the 2013 anti-bullying procedures for primary and post-primary schools, and the requirements of the procedures come into effect from 1 September 2025.

RECORDING:

All records must be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation.

The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour will adhere to the following :

- ❖ While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher(s), the relevant teachers(s) will use his/her/their professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same. If it is established that bullying has occurred this must be reported to the Principal / Deputy Principal.
 - ❖ If established by the relevant teacher(s) that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher(s) 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
 - ❖ The relevant teacher(s) may use the recording template to record the bullying behaviour
 - ❖ 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
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- ❖ 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 parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying involves a whole school approach. 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 seek referrals so that appropriate outside agencies in order 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. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on: November 19th 2024
10. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website, is readily accessible to parents and pupils on request, and made available to the Department and the Patron if requested.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management annually.

Signed: A. Copeland

Date: 19-11-24

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: A. P. Kett

Date: 19.11.24

Principal / Secretary BoM

Appendices:

Checklist for Board of Management

Template for Recording Bullying Concern

General Behaviours Which Apply to Types of Bullying

Practical Tips for Building a Positive School Culture & Common Types of Bullying Explained