



Anti-Bullying Policy

Annual Review 30th January 2024

We endeavour to be a gentle and kind school every day!

Anti-bullying Policy

1. The Anti-Bullying policy was reviewed after the publication of the Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying in January 2023.
2. 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. Louis Infant 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.(Document Attached, Appendix 1)
3. The whole school community and the Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils (victims and bullies) and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour: (see Appendix 2) for a full list of actions that help prevent and tackle bullying.
 - A positive school culture and climate which-

- o is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
 - o encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
 - o promotes respectful relationships across the school community;
- Effective leadership and management of a positive school environment
- A school-wide approach to managing bullying incidents;
- A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that-
 - o build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
 - o Explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- Effective supervision at all times during the day and in particular on the transition times 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.

4. **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”. (Appendix 1)

This definition was updated using the Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying

“Bullying is targeted behaviour, online or offline, that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society” (p.21).

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
- Intimidation
- Physical aggression
- Name calling
- Extortion
- Damage to property
- 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.
- Please Note: 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.
- Incidents that happen outside school will be dealt with if parents inform us of the bullying and if it is having an impact on the children at school.

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 Appendix 3 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

This message will need to be communicated clearly to parents as many parents and children call all types of misbehaviour "Bullying"

5. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows:

A pupil or parent may bring a bullying concern to any teacher in the school. Individual teachers must take appropriate measures regarding reports of bullying behaviour in accordance with St. Louis Infant School's anti-bullying policy.

The relevant teacher will normally be the class teacher.

However, all teachers and support staff are responsible for reporting bullying to the deputy principal and principal.

5. Prevention Strategies for St. Louis Infant School include

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

The aim of the prevention strategies are to:

- Prevent and raise awareness of all aspects of bullying
- Provide children with 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
- Prevent and raise awareness of cyber-bullying by educating pupils on appropriate online behaviour (age appropriate), how to stay safe while online. (Acceptable Use Policy)
- To help teachers influence attitudes to bullying behaviour in a positive manner
- To prevent bullying and the promote respect for diversity and inclusiveness

Prevention Strategies

- Due in large to the age of the children in our school the staff and parents feel it is unlikely that the children have the ability or technology to be involved in cyber-bullying at school. We

will however monitor this on a yearly basis. We also recommend that children in our infant school should be deterred from social networking and strongly advise parents not to allow these young children to join these sites, due in large to the age requirement of the sites (i.e. giving the child a false age to allow them to join online).

- 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 & RSE programmes provide the children with personal safety skills, which seek to enhance children's self-protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying. Various other social, health and media education programmes can further help to address the problem of bullying behaviour.
- The introduction of Monthly Values in January 2015 helps promote positive behaviour among the whole school.
- All subjects – art, drama, music can complement the discussion of bullying
- Sporting activities working as a team and the rewards of working cooperatively
- Physical Education – Healthy lifestyles and living

- Wellbeing Initiatives improve and create a positive learning environment.
- Friendship Weeks or Days
- Renew and review our Health Promoting School Programme by contacting the HSE
- National Education Psychological Services - Incredible Years Training offers advice and incentives on positive behaviour
- The staff devote part of their Croke Park staff meetings to Anti-Bullying
- Temporary and substitute teachers upon appointment will be made aware of our anti-bullying procedures and policy.
- Adequate Supervision at all times during the school day
- Information for parents
- Board of Management Reporting

6. Investigating

(i) 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

(ii) 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

(iii) Non-teaching staff such as secretary, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus drivers, and caretaker, cleaner must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

(iv) 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

(v) It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset

(vi) Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents

(vii) 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

(ix) All investigations 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

(x) 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

(xi) 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

(xii) Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher

(xii) 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 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

(xiii) It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s)

(xiv) 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

xvi) 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;

(xvii) Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved may be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together later if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable

(xviii) 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

(xx) 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.

(xxi) 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.

7. Recording

Noting and reporting of bullying behaviour is to be documented using the *template for recording bullying behaviour* (DES Template

Appendix 3). 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:

(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/their professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding it

(ii) If it is 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

(iii) The relevant teacher(s) must use the recording template at Appendix 4 to record the bullying behaviour, which is available on the back of this policy.

(iv) These reports will be located in the principal's office in the Anti-Bullying folder

8. Supports for Pupils Affected by Bullying

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 with appropriate outside agencies in order to receive further support for the pupils and their families if needed.

Serious instances of bullying behaviour should, in accordance with the Children

First and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, be

referred to the HSE Children and Family Services and/or Gardaí as appropriate.

The Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools also provide that where school personnel have concerns about a child but are not sure whether to report the matter to the HSE, the Designated Liaison Person must seek advice from the HSE Children and Family Social Services.

A programme of support for pupils who have been bullied must be in place. Such pupils may need counselling and/or opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed.

As part of the intervention process, the principal will contact NEPs if advice is needed to produce a programme of support for those pupils involved in bullying behaviour. Pupils involved in bullying behaviour need assistance on an ongoing basis. For those with low self-esteem, opportunities should be developed to increase feelings of self-worth. It is, therefore, important that the learning strategies applied within the school allow for the enhancement of the pupil's self-worth.

Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.

Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour should be encouraged to discuss them with teachers who will seek advice from the HSE and NEPs.

9. 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.

10. 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.

Summary of Anti-Bullying Steps

Positive Learning Environment

Prevention

Investigate

Record

Determine

Contact parents

Support

Supervise and Monitor

11. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 10th February 2015 and reviewed in April 2018 / January 2020 / February 2023.

12. This policy has been made available to all school personnel, both teaching and non –teaching and published on the school website and provided to the Parents’ Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

13. 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 and provided to the Parents’ Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Date of next review: April 2018 / January 2020 / January 2021/ June 2023/
January 2024

Reviewed by the Board of Management on 30th January 2024

Signed: Noel Cunningham
Chairperson of Board of Management
Date: 30th January 2024

Signed: Carmel McCarroll
Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management
Date: 30th January 2024

Appendix 1

The working group on bullying highlighted the following, immediate actions that schools can take which will help to prevent and tackle bullying in schools:

- Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.
- Explicitly teach students what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks

like; acts like; sounds like; feels like in class and around the school.

- Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the

school. Involve students 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 children with a disability.

- Give constructive feedback to students when respectful behaviour and respectful

language are ignored.

- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour

in addition, compliance with the school rules and routines.

- Explicitly teach students about the appropriate use of social media.
- Positively encourage students to comply with the school rules on mobile phone

and internet use. Follow up and follow through with students who ignore the rules.

- Actively involve parents / 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 child friendly language in the

classroom and in common areas.

- Actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- Ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.
- School staff can get children and students 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, changing rooms, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision.

- Hot times again tend to be times where there is less structured supervision

such as when children and young people are in the playground/school yard or moving classrooms.

Appendix 2

The following are some of the types of bullying behaviour that can occur amongst pupils:

Physical aggression: This behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While pupils often engage in 'mess fights', they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.

Intimidation: Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation. It may be based on the use of very aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon. Particularly upsetting can be a facial expression, which conveys aggression and/or dislike.

Isolation/exclusion and other relational bullying: This occurs where a certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or the entire class group. This practice is usually initiated by the person engaged in bullying behaviour and can be difficult to detect. It may be accompanied by writing insulting remarks about the pupil in public places, by passing around notes about or drawings of the pupil or by whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard. Relational bullying occurs when a

person's attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. One of the most common forms includes control: 'Do this or I won't be your friend anymore'(implied or stated), a group ganging up against one person (girl or boy), non-verbal gesturing, malicious gossip, spreading rumours about a person or giving them the 'silent treatment'.

Cyber-bullying:

This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, email, instant messaging (IM), apps, gaming sites, chat rooms and other online technologies. Being the target of inappropriate or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying. As cyber-bullying uses technology to perpetrate bullying behaviour and does not require face-to face-contact, cyber-bullying can occur at any time (day or night). Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyber-bullying. For example, a target may be sent homophobic text messages or pictures may be posted with negative comments about a person's sexuality, appearance etc.

Name calling: Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) that hurts insults or humiliates should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name calling of this type

refers to physical appearance, e.g. size or clothes worn. Accent or distinctive voice characteristics may attract negative attention. Academic ability can also provoke name-calling. This tends to operate at two extremes. There are those who are singled out for attention because they are perceived to be weak academically. At the other extreme there are those who, because they are perceived as high achievers are also targeted

Damage to property: Personal property can be the focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, schoolbooks and other learning material or interference with a pupil's locker or bicycle. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden

Extortion: Demands for money may be made, often accompanied by threats (sometimes carried out in the event of the targeted pupil not delivering on the demand). A pupil may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to another who is engaged in bullying behaviour.

Appendix 3

Useful Numbers

Anti-Bullying Centre	(01) 6082573
CAB – Campaign against Bullying	(01) 2887976
Childline Freephone	1800 666660
Irish Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy	(01) 2300061
ISPCC	(01) 6794944
The National Association for Parents Support (NAPS)	(0502) 20598
Parentline (Parents under Stress)	(01) 8733500
Samaritans (Callsave)	1850 609090
Sticks and Stones Theatre Company	(01) 2807065
Trinity College Dublin – Anti-Bullying Research Centre	(01) 6601011
Victim Support	1800 661771

Some Useful Websites

Bullying @ school information – www.scre.ac.uk/bully

Bullying information on Bullying Child/Parents/Teachers
www.lfcc.on.ca/bully

Bullying in schools www.ericcece.org/pubs/digests/1997/banks97

What Parents should know about Bullying –
www.accesseric.org/resources/parent/bully

Anti-Bullying Campaign Tools for Teachers -
www.antibullyingcampaign.ie

