



St. Nessian's National School,
Mungret,
Co. Limerick.
14409N

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. Nesson's National 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 committed to the following key principles of best practice 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
 - 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 anti-bullying policy as part of the end of year review process. Pupils in the Senior Classes / the Student Council will also be involved in such ongoing evaluation

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 definitions of bullying;

- deliberate exclusion, isolation, 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.

This definition includes a wide range of behaviour, whether verbal or written, whether physical or social, whether targeting person or property, whether carried out directly or indirectly or through any electronic or other medium, which could harm a pupil or undermine her/his self-esteem or self-confidence.

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. The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying will be the appropriate class teachers in the first instance. Other teachers or other members of staff may, depending on circumstances, be involved in the investigation process. The Principal may be involved after initial investigation by the relevant teacher(s) if necessary.
 - A pupil or parent may bring a bullying concern to any teacher in the school but the relevant teacher for investigating and dealing with bullying will normally be the class teacher
 - If a bullying concern is reported to any other member of staff, that member of staff will report such concern to the relevant teacher

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows;
 - The SPHE curriculum (including the anti-bullying module, the Walk Tall and Stay Safe programmes) is used throughout the school to support the anti-bullying policy
 - Positive self-esteem /self-worth is fostered among the pupils by celebrating individual differences, by acknowledging good behaviour and by providing opportunities for success
 - Pupils are encouraged to report incidents of bullying and will be informed that in doing so they are acting responsibly
 - Pupils are helped to develop empathy by discussing feelings and by trying to put themselves in the place of others
 - Teachers respond sensitively to pupils who disclose incidents of bullying
 - The school will hold an Anti-Bullying Awareness Day once per term
 - Talks on safe internet use / cyber-bullying will be given to 5th and 6th Classes and to the parents in conjunction with the Parents' Association
 - Class assemblies will be used to reinforce the anti-bullying policy
 - Insofar as is reasonably practicable, school activities will be supervised and monitored at all times with particular emphasis on those occasions when incidents of bullying are more likely to occur, such as assembly time, break time and dismissal time
 - Staff are particularly vigilant in monitoring pupils who are considered at risk of bullying / being bullied

- Non-teaching staff will be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher
- All disclosed incidents of alleged bullying are investigated
- Awareness-raising exercises for each class group (*e.g. from the 'Awareness-Raising' strand of the Anti-Bullying Campaign, via its website*), pro-actively explaining the nature and variety, causes, consequences and unacceptability of bullying
 - Pupils are helped to examine the issue of bullying in a calm rational way, outside of the tense context of particular bullying incidents. In the process they are made more aware of the nature of bullying and the various forms that it can take
 - Pupils are made aware that the consequences of bullying behaviour are always bad for those who are targeted, even if this is not always obvious at the time
 - Pupils are encouraged to recognise, reject and report bullying behaviour
- The school staff and parents/guardians will be made aware of the nature of bullying and the signs that might indicate that a pupil is being bullied. They are encouraged to be vigilant in watching out for signs of bullying and to report any suspicion of bullying they may have to the relevant teacher (in the case of staff members) or any staff member (in the case of parents/guardians)

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.

Reporting Bullying Behaviour

- A pupil or parent may bring a bullying concern to any teacher in the school but the relevant teacher for investigating and dealing with bullying will normally be the class teacher. On occasion, reports of bullying that may be anonymous are investigated
- If a bullying concern is reported to any other member of staff, that member of staff will report such concern to the relevant teacher

Investigating and Dealing with Incidents:

- The relevant teacher investigates all instances of reported or suspected bullying behaviour with a view to establishing the facts and bringing any such behaviour to an end
- The relevant teacher will at all times use his / her professional judgement in any such investigation
- The School, through the relevant teacher will investigate incidents of alleged bullying through using the method of Shared Concern. This will be a standard procedure and does not necessarily imply that a pupil is guilty of misbehaviour
- In the event that a pupil / pupils has / have been involved in bullying behaviour they are asked to sign a binding promise that they will treat all pupils fairly, equally and respectfully including the targeted pupil(s). (See Appendix D)
- If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first. After such individual interviews, all those involved will be met as a group where each member will be asked to give his / her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements
- Incidents will be investigated outside the classroom situation as far as is possible to ensure the privacy of all involved
- All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned
- The relevant teacher does not apportion blame but rather treats bullying behaviour as a "mistake" that can and must be remedied. S/he emphasises that the intention is not to punish perpetrators but to talk to them, to explain how harmful and hurtful bullying is and to seek a promise that it will stop. If that promise is forthcoming and is honoured there will be no penalty and that will be the end of the matter
- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher(s) that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved will be contacted 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
- When an investigation is completed and/or a bullying situation is resolved the relevant teacher will complete a report, to include the findings of the investigation, the strategy adopted and the outcome of the intervention, as well as any other relevant information. (See Appendix C)

- If a pupil has signed such a promise but then chooses to break that promise and continue the bullying behaviour, this can then no longer be considered a "mistake." In this event parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed. This further bullying behaviour is regarded as a very grave matter and a serious sanction may be imposed by the school authorities (See sanctions below)
- All documentation regarding bullying incidents and their resolution is retained securely in the school
- Parents and children 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

Sanctions:

Where a pupil has been found to be engaged in bullying behaviour, has formally promised to stop and has broken that promise, and / or where the bullying behaviour is, in the opinion of the relevant teacher and the Principal / Deputy Principal, a particularly serious matter, disciplinary sanctions in line with the school's Code of Behaviour may be imposed:

- Parent(s)/guardian(s) may be contacted by the relevant teacher and informed of the nature and extent of the bullying behaviour with a view to agreeing a strategy whereby a promise to end the bullying behaviour would be honoured
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) may be invited to a meeting with the relevant teacher and the Principal and the pupil may be suspended from school
- The case may be referred to the Board of Management

Follow Up

- In determining whether or not 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 Principal or Deputy Principal

- Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, the parent will be referred, as appropriate, to the Schools' Complaints Procedures.
- In the event that a parent has exhausted the Schools' Complaints Procedures and is still not satisfied, the school will advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children

Recording:

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 recording are as follows:

- All staff must keep a written record of any bullying incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. All bullying incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher who must keep a written record of the reports, actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.
- Appendix C will be used to record investigations. Page two of Appendix C will only be filled in and signed if, in the professional judgement of the relevant teacher, the issues have been resolved and the relationships of the party / parties involved have been restored as far as is practicable within 20 days of the investigation being concluded
- The relevant teacher must inform the Principal of all bullying incidents being investigated
- If the relevant teacher establishes that bullying has occurred, he / she 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

Using the Recording Template

The relevant teacher must use the recording template at Appendix B to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

- 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

When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the Principal. These records are kept securely by both the relevant teacher and Principal and will be retained in the school for perpetuity.

Reporting

- The Principal will report to the Board of Management at least once per school term the number of bullying incidents reported to him through the recording template

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

Bullied pupils:

- Ending the bullying behaviour
- Fostering more respect for bullied pupils and all pupils
- Fostering greater empathy towards and support for bullied pupils
- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the awareness-raising programme
- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the speedy identification of those responsible and speedy resolution of bullying situations
- Helping bullied pupils raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school)

Bullying pupils:

- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are not blamed or punished and get a 'clean sheet'
- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are doing the right and honourable thing and giving them praise for this
- Helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school)

- Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils' feelings of self-worth
- In dealing with negative behaviour in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child
- In dealing with bullying behaviour seeking resolution and offering a fresh start with a 'clean sheet' and no blame in return for keeping a promise to reform

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 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, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller Community.

10. This policy was adopted on April 10, 2014.

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills 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 and provided to the Parents' Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the Department and the patron.

Signed: _____

Chairperson of Board of Management

Principal

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____

APPENDIX A; Examples of Bullying Behaviour

Bullying may take a number of forms. These may include any of the following non-exhaustive list.

Repeated aggressive behaviour/attitude/body language, for example:

- Shouting and uncontrolled anger
- Personal insults
- Verbal abuse
- Offensive language directed at an individual
- Continually shouting or dismissing others
- Public verbal attacks/criticism
- Domineering behaviour
- Open aggression
- Offensive gestures and unwanted physical contact

Intimidation, physical, psychological or emotional, for example:

- Treating in a dictatorial manner
- Ridicule,
- Persistent slagging
- Deliberate staring with the intent to discomfort
- Persistent rudeness in behaviour and attitude toward a particular individual
- Asking inappropriate questions/making inappropriate comments re. personal life/family
- Asking inappropriate questions/making inappropriate comments re. social life or schoolwork

Interference with property, for example:

- Stealing/damaging books or equipment
- Stealing/damaging clothing or other property
- Demanding money with menaces
- Persistently moving, hiding or interfering with property
- Marking/defacing property

Undermining/Public or Private Humiliation, for example:

- Condescending tone
- Deliberately withholding significant information and resources
- Writing of anonymous notes

- Malicious, disparaging or demeaning comments
- Malicious tricks/derogatory jokes
- Knowingly spreading rumours
- Belittling others' efforts, their enthusiasm or their new ideas
- Derogatory or offensive nicknames (name-calling)
- Using electronic or other media for any of the above (cyber bullying)
- Disrespectfully mimicking a particular individual in his/her absence
- Deliberately refusing to address issues focusing instead on the person

Ostracising or isolating, for example:

- Deliberately marginalising an individual
- Deliberately preventing a person from joining a group
- Deliberately preventing from joining in an activity, schoolwork-related or recreational
- Blaming a pupil for things s/he did not do

APPENDIX B; Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour

1. Name of pupil being bullied: _____
2. Class: _____
3. Teacher: _____
4. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

Name	Class	Teacher

5. Source of bullying concern / report (Tick relevant box(es))

Pupil concerned	
Other pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

6. Location of incident(s) (Tick relevant box(es))

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
Other	

7. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern(s)

8. Type of bullying behaviour (Tick relevant box(es))

Physical aggression		Cyber-bullying	
Damage to property		Intimidation	
Isolation / Exclusion		Malicious gossip	
Name calling		Other (Specify)	

9. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category

Homophobic	Disability / SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller Community	Other (specify)

10. Brief description of bullying behaviour and its impact

11. Details of action taken

Signed: _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date: _____

Date submitted to Principal / Deputy Principal: _____

APPENDIX C; **Report on Investigation into Bullying Behaviour**

Name of pupil being bullied: _____

Class: _____

Teacher: _____

Date incident brought to the attention of the relevant teacher: _____

Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) involved in bullying behaviour:

Name	Class	Teacher

Findings of the investigation:

Strategy adopted in investigation:

Outcome of the intervention:

Any other relevant information:

Follow Up:

I have used the procedures contained in the Anti-Bullying Policy and in my professional judgement the issues have been resolved and the relationships of the party / parties involved have been restored as far as is practicable.

Signed: _____ (Relevant Teacher)

Date: _____

I have been made aware of the investigation into bullying behaviour as outlined in this form.

Signed: _____ (Principal)

APPENDIX D; Binding Promise re Future Behaviour



I recognise that I have been involved in bullying behaviour that has caused hurt to another child / other children in the school. I promise that in the future I will treat all children in the school fairly, equally and respectfully including in particular _____.

I understand that this is a binding promise and that if I break this promise at any time in the future, I may be subject to more serious sanctions.

Signed: _____ (Pupil)

Class: _____

Date: _____

Signed: _____ (Parent / Guardian)

_____ (Parent / Guardian)

Witnessed: _____ (Class Teacher)

_____ (Principal)