Anti-bullying policy St. Aidan's N.S.

All sections of this template must be completed

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. Aidan's 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.

➤ 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 and
- 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*.

The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows: (see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):

- ➤ The class teacher of the pupil allegedly being bullied
- ➤ The teacher on yard/supervision duty at the time of the alleged incident
- ➤ The principal/deputy principal/assistant principal (as appropriate)

(see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools)

The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic

bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows (see Section 6.5 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):

St. Aidan's N.S endeavours to put in place appropriate systems to ensure that ALL relevant members of the school community (parents, pupils, staff and the wider community) have a shared understanding of what constitutes bullying behaviour as defined in this policy (Section 2&3 of Anti Bullying Procedures for Primary & Post Primary Schools). We endeavaour to

- ➢ 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;

The following education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying) will be used by St. Aidan's N.S. (Ref:Section 6.5 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):

Education and prevention strategies:

School-wide approach

- ➢ 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.
- ➢ Whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develops an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives 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 teachers
- ➢ 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 communication technology within the school.
- ➢ Involvement of the student council in contributing to a safe school environment e.g.Buddy system, mentoring, Lunchtime Buddies and other student support activities that can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- ➢ Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school-to be displayed publicly in classrooms and in common areas of 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 on enrolment.
- ➢ The implementation of regular (e.g. per year) whole school awareness measures e.g. a dedicated notice board in the school and classrooms on the promotion of friendship,

and bullying prevention; annual Anti-bullying Week and parents/guardians seminars organised by Parents Association.; annual student surveys during Anti Bullying Week;

➢ Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. 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, e.g.:

- Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
- Hand note up with homework.
- Make a phone call to the school
- Anti-bully or Worry box?
- Get a parent/guardian or friend to tell on your behalf.
- Ensure 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 protocol should be developed in consultation with parents.

➢ 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

➢ The listing of supports currently being used in the school and the identification of other supports available to the school.

Supports for Staff:

Regular discussion and review of policy and procedures is essential to support staff on a continuous basis

➢ All staff must have a uniform interpretation of what is expected in relation to bullying, how to identify possible bullying behaviours, how to manage disclosures and how to deal effectively with incidents of bullying within the classroom context

➢ Staff must be aware that supporting one another is a key aspect of prevention and new/inexperienced members of staff must be given every opportunity to discuss concerns and model best practice

➢ CPD in relation to Anti Bullying Strategies will be supported and encouraged for all members of staff including staff training in restorative practice

Implementation of curricula:

- The full implementation of the SPHE and the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on **Relational aggression** (Cool School Programme: A Friend in Deed), **Cyber Bullying** (#UP2US, Be Safe-Be Web wise, Think Before you Click, Let's Fight it Together, Web wise Primary teachers' resources), **Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying** (Growing up LGBT, Stand Up Programme, The Trust pack) **Diversity and Inter-culturalism,** Yellow Flag Programme**.**
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes at primary level. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardai, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying
- The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.

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 (see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools) :

Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying:

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

Reporting bullying behaviour

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;

Investigating and dealing with incidents: Style of approach (see section 6.8.9)

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the relevant teacher will exercise her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) 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 discussions 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 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 the interview by the teacher;

In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parent(s)/guardian(s) 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 parent(s)/guardian(s) an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the pupils;

Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to 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;

It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parent(s)/guardian(s)) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school;

Follow up and recording:

In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of 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 parent(s)/guardian(s)s 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(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
➤ In the event that a parent(s)/guardian(s) has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Recording of bullying behaviour;

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 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. Consideration needs to be given to where the records will be made e.g. incident book. 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. Teacher have a very specific recording template to use (see appendix)
➤ The relevant teacher must inform the principal of all incidents being investigated.

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 appropriate written records which will assist her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
➤ The school in consultation with the relevant teacher/s should develop a protocol for the storage of all records retained by the relevant teacher. A copy of all records should be provided to the Principal to file

Formal Stage 2-Appendix 3 (From DES Procedures)

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

a) in cases where she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred; and

b) All confirmed instances of bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

The recording template must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal. Teachers records are retained in a secure space in the teachers classroom. All report templates given to the Principal will be retained in the filing cabinet in the Principals Office.

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 parent/guardian to support school interventions
- ➢ No Blame Approach
- ➢ Circle Time
- ➢ Restorative interviews
- ➢ Restorative conferencing

The Procedures mention the following intervention strategies and reference Ken Rigby;

www.bullyingawarenessweek.org/pdf/BullyingPreventionStrategiesinSchoolsKenRigby.pdf

St. Aidan's N.S is committed to exploring these interventions further:

- ➢ The traditional successful disciplinary approach
- ➢ Strengthening the victim
- ➢ Mediation
- ➢ Restorative Practice
- ➢ The Support Group Method
- ➢ The Method of Shared Concern

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows (see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools) :

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 e.g.

- SPHE Lessons
- Stay Safe Programme
- Walk Tall
- NEPS programmes on www.neps.ie
- Anti Bullying Week
- Buddy system
- Care Team Support inc Social Skills Group
- Group work such as circle time

> If pupils require counselling or further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. **NEPS will also be contacted for advice**
> Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

> **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.

> **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.

> This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____ [date].

➢ 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 (or where none exists, be otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: _____   Signed: _____
          (Chairperson of Board of Management)   (Principal)

Date: _____   Date: _____

Date of next review: _____

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.

Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.

➢ 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 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 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, 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 pupils are in the playground/school yard or moving classrooms.

➢ Support the establishment and work of student councils.

Appendix 2 Template for recording bullying behaviour

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
Other Pupil
Parent
Teacher
Other

4. Location of incidents
tick relevant box(es))*
Playground
Classroom
Corridor
Toilets
Bus
Other

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

<div style="border:1px solid black; height:200px;"></div>

6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) *

Physical Aggression   Cyber-bullying
Isolation/Exclusion   Malicious Gossip
Name Calling   Other (specify)

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

Homophobic	Disability / SEN related	Racist	Mebership of Traveller community	Other (specify)

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

9. Details of actions taken

Sigend: _____(Relevant Teacher) **Date:** _____

Date submitted to Principal / Deputy Principal

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 *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*?	Yes
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	Yes

Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	Yes
Is the Board satisfied 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?	Yes
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	Yes
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	Yes
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	Yes
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	Yes
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	Yes
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	Yes
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?	Yes
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	No
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	No
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	No
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?	Yes
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	No
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	Yes

Signed _____   Date _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _____   Date _____
Principal

Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the anti-bullying policy

To: _____

The Board of Management of _____ wishes to inform you that:

o   The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of _____ [date].

o   This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in **Appendix 4** of the Department's *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.*

Signed _____   Date _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _____   Date _____
Principal