

Anti-Bullying Policy

School Position on Bullying

St. Oliver's National School believes that each pupil has a right to an education free from fear and intimidation.

The school regards bullying as a serious infringement of individual rights and a serious threat to the self-esteem and self-confidence of targeted pupil(s). Therefore it does not tolerate bullying of any kind.

Every report of bullying will be treated seriously and dealt with, having due regard for the wellbeing of the targeted pupil(s) and the perpetrator(s).

The immediate priority, should a bullying incident occur, is ending the bullying, (*thereby protecting the person(s) being targeted*) and resolving the issues and restoring the relationships involved insofar as is practicable using a **'Reform, not Blame'** approach.

All pupils are expected to contribute to the creation and maintenance of a safe environment in the school. On becoming aware of any bullying situation, in or outside the school, involving members of the school community they should notify a trusted responsible adult. Bullying behaviour is too serious not to report.

Pupils' participation in school life in general is encouraged through existing school structures. Awareness of bullying, and willingness to take action to prevent or stop it, is part of this participation.

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. Oliver'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, the school's Code of Behaviour, the Complaints Procedure for Parents and Grievance Procedure for Staff and Teaching Council's Professional Code of Conduct for Teachers.
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) 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;
- b) Effective leadership;
- c) A school-wide approach;
- d) A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
- e) 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.
- f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
- g) Supports for staff;
- h) Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
- i) On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

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.

Appendix 1 gives a list of specific examples of bullying behaviour. This list is not exhaustive.

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- General behaviour which apply to all types of bullying including name calling, physical aggression.
- Relational Bullying including deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip
- Cyber-Bullying
- Identity-Based Bullying
- Sexual Bullying
- Special Educational Needs Disability

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.

Appendix 2 has advice for parents and for pupils.

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. As this is a primary school the teacher investigating and dealing with bullying in St. Oliver's N.S. will normally be the class teacher.

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity based bullying) used by the school are as follows:

Creation of a culture of "telling".

- Teachers should repeatedly reinforce the message that if anyone is the victim of bullying behaviour, they should not retaliate in any way, but they should tell an adult. Victims should be reassured that if they tell, something will be done about the bullying in a safe manner and all reported incidents will be dealt with.
- Class lessons to be provided to enable pupils "how to tell" and "who to tell". Bystanders can be the key to resolving bullying and if anyone witnesses bullying behaviour, they should always tell a teacher. This is not telling tales but a means of protecting victims.
- A "worry box" to be put in the corridor

Raising the awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour by -

- Displaying school's anti-bullying statement (*Bullying is wrong and is not tolerated in St. Oliver's N.S. We are a telling school*) in school porch and other prominent places around the school environment (What is bullying? What is not bullying? What to do if you feel you are being bullied? What to do if you see somebody else being bullied?)
- Engaging in formal teaching within the class setting through SPHE and RE programmes.
- Creating an annual awareness week for school community about bullying. (Week in October). This will involve discussion, anti - bullying games, poster/slogan competitions, bullying surveys(3rd-6th), co-operative games, extra-curricular activities etc.

Other strategies

- Formal programmes of work are a vital element in raising children's self-esteem and equipping children to cope with bullying behaviour e.g. Walk Tall, RSE, Alive-O, Webwise, Stay safe
- Positive reinforcement by teachers in classroom setting (Students of the week, Golden time, spot prizes, stars, stickers etc.)
- Modelling of respectful behaviour by teachers and staff.
- Promotion of extra-curricular activities which encourage co-operation among pupils (to extend this beyond sport).
- Rewarding incidents of good and improved behaviour and showing acts of kindness at class level and whole-school through Student of the Week.
- Encouraging students to look out for each other and to be responsible for their own behaviour.
- All teachers are required to be vigilant on yard duty- record all incidences- monitor repeat offenders
- Immediate affirmation of children who report incidents of bullying which they have witnessed.
- Circle-time sessions, role-play, Socially Speaking programs and puppetry are methodologies which are used to discuss and explore issues of bullying.
- To prepare a "quiet room" (Library area) for circle time and other programs.
- Each class to have a set of class rules which are compliment the school's Code of Behaviour.
- A friendship/respect week to be held in February.
- Sanctions for unauthorised use of the internet/electronic devices will be imposed as per the Code of Behaviour.
- Advise parents that social networking sites e.g. Facebook are not suitable for Primary School children.
- Advise parents that applications on Smart Phones etc. should be closely monitored
- Develop childrens 'self-esteem and sense of self-worth at all times through praise etc.

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, either spontaneously or through questionnaires which may be used in the school.

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:

Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

*The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to **resolve** and to **restore** as far as is practicable the relationships of the parties involved rather than to apportion blame.*

Important points to note in investigation and reporting

- ✓ All reports of bullying must be investigated
- ✓ If incident is of a more serious nature teacher reports to principal sooner
- ✓ Pupils should be interviewed individually first and then as a group
- ✓ Questionnaires may be used
- ✓ Disciplinary sanctions will be a private matter between the pupil being disciplined their parents and the school
- ✓ Non-teaching staff should also report cases of Bullying
- ✓ Explicit teaching of "Its ok to tell the teacher"
- ✓ Encourage all children to report any bullying behaviour that they witness

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:

1. If a bullying incident occurs under the supervision of the yard duty teacher, the yard duty teacher will inform the class teacher and the class teacher will investigate the matter.
2. Relevant teacher will decide if they are dealing with a bullying incident or breach of Code of Behaviour
3. Seek answers to the 5 w's - what, why, where, who, when. Do not ask leading questions.
4. Record all incidents of mistreatment of others. Teachers will have an incident book for recording such incidents. These also include Child Protection issues, Attendance/Punctuality, Code of Behaviour as well as Bullying.
5. Investigate incidents outside the classroom to ensure privacy. Interviews should be conducted sensitively. The aim is to restore relationships rather than apportioning blame.
6. Pupils who are not directly involved but who have information should be interviewed.

7. Where a group is involved talk to each pupil individually first and then as a group.
8. Ask all parties involved to write down their account of what happened. Accept the pupil's version of events. Do not ask the pupil to change their statement. Instead discuss points with them that you feel may not be a factual account of the event.
9. Following your investigation inform the pupil, if it is your conclusion, that they are breaching the Anti-Bullying Policy. Try to get the pupil to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
10. Inform pupils of sanctions/steps to follow i.e. parent contact
11. Talk to parents about the incident and inform them of actions to follow.
12. Bring pupils together for reconciliation if appropriate. Every effort should be made to restore the relationship.
13. Inform Principal/Deputy Principal of your contact with parents
14. Teacher must keep notes of reported incident in the class incident book provided.
15. In the meantime monitor the situation
16. Arrange a follow up contact with parents after 2 weeks.
17. If the matter is not resolved after 20 days class teacher informs Principal or Deputy Principal.
18. The matter is then recorded by the class teacher on the reporting template (Appendix 3) and a copy is given to the Principal
19. The Principal/Deputy Principal will meet the parents of both parties in order to get a positive resolution to the matter
20. If a resolution is not possible and the parents are not satisfied with how the school has dealt with a bullying case, according to this policy, parents must be referred to school's complaint procedures. The Board will set up an independent group to investigate the complaint, to gather all evidence and to formulate an action plan to deal with the complaint.
21. In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaint procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Factors to be taken into account in ensuring that a bullying incident has been adequately and appropriately dealt with:

- ✓ Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased
- ✓ Whether issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable
- ✓ Whether the relationships between the parties has been restored as far as is practicable
- ✓ Any feedback received from the parties involved

The Principal will report to the Board of Management on a termly basis

- ✓ The overall number of bullying cases reported to the Principal
- ✓ Confirmation that all these cases have been or are being dealt with according to this policy and the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools (2013)

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

- Use Education programmes to enhance self-esteem of children who are affected by Bullying
- Set up a buddy system at yard time so children are not left out of games
- Call on witnesses to clarify Bullying incidents
- Give the child a diary to record their feelings
- Opportunities organised for those with low self-esteem – send on messages etc.
- Talk from qualified personnel
- Positive reinforcement – visible signs around the school
- Staff members should be alerted to victims of Bullying so they can look out for them on the yard
- All staff dealing with a bullying incident will, as well as reasoning with the pupil perpetrating the negative behaviour, also offer support and comfort to the victim
- In order to build self-esteem some children may be invited to assist in the organisation of, or participate in extra- curricular activities at break time.
- Making adequate counselling facilities available to pupils who need it in a timely manner.

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 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.

10. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____.

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, is readily accessible to parents and pupils on request and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department 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, will be otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request 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.

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

Date: _____ **Date:** _____

Date of next review: _____

Appendix 1

Bullying can take a number of forms. These may include any of the following (this list is not exhaustive):	
General behaviour which apply to all types of bullying	Relational Bullying
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Physical aggression ▪ Damage to property ▪ Name calling ▪ Slagging ▪ Offensive graffiti ▪ Extortion ▪ Intimidation ▪ Insulting or offensive gestures ▪ The “look” ▪ Invasion of personal space 	<p>This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Malicious gossip ▪ Isolation & exclusion ▪ Ignoring ▪ Excluding from the group ▪ Taking someone’s friends away ▪ “Bitching” ▪ Spreading rumours ▪ Breaking confidence ▪ Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear ▪ Use of terminology such as ‘nerd’ in a derogatory way
Identity Based Bullying	Special Educational Needs Disability
<p>Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gender ▪ Civil status ▪ Family status ▪ Sexual orientation ▪ Religion ▪ Age ▪ Disability ▪ Race ▪ Membership of the traveller community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Name calling ▪ Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs ▪ Taking advantage of some pupils’ vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying ▪ Taking advantage of some pupils’ vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues ▪ Mimicking a person’s disability ▪ Setting others up for ridicule
Sexual bullying	Cyber Bullying
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching ▪ Harassment 	<p>There are many types of cyber-bullying. The more common types are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Text messages – can be threatening or cause discomfort. Also included here is ‘Bluejacking’ (the sending of anonymous text messages over short distances using bluetooth wireless technology) ▪ Picture/video-clips via mobile phone cameras – images sent to others to make the victim feel threatened or embarrassed ▪ Mobile phone calls – silent calls, abusive messages or stealing the

	<p>victim's phone and using it to harass others, to make them believe the victim is responsible</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Emails – threatening or bullying emails, often sent using a pseudonym or somebody else's name▪ Chat room bullying – menacing or upsetting responses to children or young people when they are in a web-based chat room▪ Instant messaging (IM) – unpleasant messages sent while children conduct real-time conversations online using MSM (Microsoft Messenger), Yahoo Chat or similar tools▪ Bullying via websites – use of defamatory blogs (web logs), personal websites and online personal 'own web space' sites such as You Tube, Facebook, Ask.fm, Bebo (which works by signing on in one's school, therefore making it easy to find a victim) and Myspace – although there are others.
--	---

Appendix 2

Advice for Pupils

- Tell yourself that you do not deserve to be bullied, and that it is **WRONG**.
- Be proud of who you are. It is good to be individual.
- Try not to show that you are upset. It is hard but a bully thrives on someone's fear.
- Stay with a group of friends/people. There is safety in numbers.
- Be assertive – shout **NO**. Walk away confidently. Go straight to a teacher or member of staff.
- Fighting back makes things worse– So don't fight back. **REPORT** to a teacher or parent(s)/guardians instead. If you need support find a friend and both of you speak to the teacher.
- Generally it is best to tell an adult you trust straight away. You will get immediate support.

The teachers will take you seriously and will deal with bullies in a way which will end the bullying and will not make things worse for you.

IF YOU KNOW SOMEONE IS BEING BULLIED:

- **TAKE ACTION** – Watching and doing nothing looks as if you are on the side of the bully. It makes the victim feel more unhappy and on their own.
- If you feel you cannot get involved, tell an adult **IMMEDIATELY**. Teachers have ways of dealing with the bully without getting you into trouble.
- Do not be, or pretend to be, friends with a bully.

Advice for Parents

- Look for unusual behaviour in your children. For example, they may suddenly not wish to attend school, feel ill regularly, or not complete work to their normal standard, ask for money or begin stealing money.
- Always take an active role in your child's education by enquiring how they are getting on.
- If you feel your child may be a victim of bullying behaviour, inform the school **IMMEDIATELY**. Your complaint will be taken seriously and appropriate action will follow.
- It is important to advise your child not to fight back. It can make matters worse.
- Tell your child there is nothing wrong with him/her. It is not her fault that they are being bullied.
- Make sure your child is fully aware of the School Policy concerning Bullying, and that they will not be afraid to ask for help.