Scoil San Treasa

Board of Management

The Rise, Mount Merrion, Co. Dublin A94EK75

Scoil San Treasa 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 Scoil San Treasa 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.

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 definition of bullying:
   - Deliberate exclusions, 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.

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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.*

4. The relevant teacher for investigating and dealing with bullying is **the class teacher.**
   In particular circumstances where it is warranted, any teacher may act as relevant teacher. However, as the class teacher has the responsibility for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying/alleged incidents of bullying relating to children in his/her class, the class teacher will be fully informed in a timely way and will take responsibility for investigating and dealing with the matter as soon as is practicably possible.

5. 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*).

❖ Our **Mission Statement** underpins and informs all our policies and practices in Scoil San Treasa. *"At Scoil San Treasa, our mission is the provision of primary education of the highest quality for all our pupils in a happy, safe, Christian environment. While we value high academic achievement, the social, personal and moral development of our pupils is of primary importance and we view the school as a learning organisation which is open to change and innovation while it cherishes the best educational, cultural and religious traditions of our society. Acknowledging that their parents are the primary educators of our children, we are inspired by a shared vision of excellence and we espouse a partnership approach in its pursuit."*

❖ **Scoil San Treasa is a Catholic school**. Catholic education values respect and inclusiveness. Catholic education seeks to enable pupils to act with integrity and justice.

   5.1   In line with our Mission Statement and our Catholic ethos, we embrace a school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.

   5.2   The *Grow in Love* programme, the core resource for the teaching of Religious Education in our school, includes teaching in the area of moral formation. From learning that they are loved as individuals, i.e. accepted and respected, they move on to learning about loving others within their home, school, community and wider community.

   5.3   Emphasis throughout the school on nurturing children's talents through provision of a diverse range of co-curricular and extra-curricular opportunities and pursuits.

   5.4   Positive reinforcement of participation and achievements through e.g. displays, postings on website and general recognition. Emphasis on generating positive self-worth through formal and informal interactions.

   5.5   School-wide awareness raising on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parents/guardians and the wider school community. Such school-wide awareness raising may include, for example: reference to positive behaviour & relevant strategies via school newsletters / website / meetings; occasional displays; occasional guest speaker (e.g. Garda talk on cyber-bullying and internet safety); Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for staff; discussions with children at Assembly time in class and on an informal occasional basis. This list is neither exhaustive nor prescriptive – school-wide awareness raising will take a variety of forms as opportunities and needs present themselves, and as time and resources permit, bearing in mind the overall priorities and resources of the school as they evolve.

5.6 On an annual basis, parents are reminded of the following: the importance of parental supervision re their child/ren's use of social media; the legal age for various social media usage; the importance of familiarising themselves with any anti-bullying material/information made available by the school – this may include websites, newsletters or talks, depending on available resources and opportunities.

5.7 Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors and school in general, school tours and extra-curricular activities. Non-teaching, ancillary and support staff will be expected to report issues to relevant teachers.

5.8 The school's anti-bullying policy is drawn to the attention of children (in an age-appropriate way) and parents each year. It is also circulated to parents of incoming pupils and is available on the school website.

5.9 A culture of telling, which includes emphasis on the importance of bystanders, is promoted. This culture is reinforced by teachers through the SPHE programme. Through encouraging this culture of telling, pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. The confidence factor is of vital importance. It is made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.

5.10 Simple and age-appropriate restorative practice procedures are drawn on in resolving conflicts e.g. yard incidents.

5.11 Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.:
- Speaking directly to teacher
- Handing a note up with homework
- Getting a parent to tell on your behalf
- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place

5.12 Focus on building self-esteem, resilience, overall emotional wellbeing self-respect and respect for others through the three strands of the Social & Personal Health Education (SPHE) programme – Me; Myself and Others; Myself and the Wider World. Supporting this through the routine dealings of the school.

5.13 Teachers may use other elements of the Primary Curriculum, such as Drama, to explore themes related to bullying/anti-bullying.

5.14 Implementation of the Stay Safe Programme in all classes each year.

5.15 ACCORD Relationship & Sexuality programme for fifth and sixth classes, and for girls in fourth class on an annual basis. (Talk for parents of pupils in those classes on annual basis.)

5.16 Clear protocols around in-school usage of internet, mobile phones, personal communication devices and ICT in general – refer to our Internet Acceptable Usage Policy (AUP) – including an emphasis on careful monitoring of access to technology within the school.

5.17 Internet Safety Week throughout the school on an annual basis.

5.18 Internet Safety guidance and tips for parents on our school website www.sstreasa.ie

5.19 Integration of the GARDA SÍOCHÁNA Internet Safety programme with the SPHE (Social & Personal Health Education) programme in 5th and sixth class – to include visit and presentation from Community Guard where possible.

5.20   Inclusive approach re Special Educational Needs. Strong emphasis on an atmosphere of mutual respect.

5.21   Supplementary programmes may be used with children with SEN - according to need e.g. social stories, 'Friends for life'. The school will specifically consider the additional needs of pupils with SEN with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.

5.22   Transition from primary to post-primary school - teachers of sixth class will include a module of work on transition to post-primary school each year.

5.23   A bank of anti-bullying resources is retained and developed in the school for teacher use in preventing bullying and in addressing it. *Note: Resources are augmented on an ongoing basis in response to emerging needs and as resources allow e.g. resources re emotional challenges/anxiety/challenging behaviour.*

5.24   Child Protection procedures are adhered to in the school – refer to our school's Child Protection Policy – available at www.sstreasa.ie

Links to Other Policies and Resources
- Code of Behaviour
- Child Protection Policy
- Internet Acceptable Use Policy
- RSE Policy
- Data Protection Policy & Appendix - available at www.sstreasa.ie or on request from school.
- DCU FUSE Anti-Bullying and Online Safety Programme – Dublin City University

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

The primary aim for the relevant teacher 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).

6.1   A pupil or parent may bring a bullying concern to any teacher in the school. The class teacher (i.e. the relevant teacher) has the responsibility for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying/alleged incidents of bullying relating to children in his/her class.

6.2   All reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. It is to 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.

6.3   In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved. (In so doing, the relevant teacher may confer with or seek advice from colleagues on a professional basis. Occasionally, advice may be sought from external agencies.)

6.4   Non-teaching, ancillary and support staff will be expected to report issues any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

6.5   All 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.

6.6   Teachers endeavour to take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents. 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.

6.7   When investigating incidents, sensitivity and respect for privacy are afforded due importance. The relevant teacher may determine that it is appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident/s.

6.8   In cases where it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the children involved are contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy).

6.9   Parents are encouraged to discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils.

6.10   Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it is made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts are made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.

6.11   It is 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.

6.12   In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded by the relevant teacher in the recording template known as Appendix 3.

6.13   In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:
- Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
- Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
- Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable; and
- Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal;

6.14   Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved are 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.

6.15   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.

6.16   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.

School's procedures for recording bullying behaviour:
All recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner.
The procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour must adhere to the following:
6.17   All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher. Any written record must be furnished to the relevant teacher. Written records should be stored safely.

6.18   The relevant teacher keeps a written record of reports of bullying and follow-up. If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must keep appropriate written records of the reports of bullying, the actions taken and any discussion with those involved regarding same. These records will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

6.19   The relevant teacher must use the recording template, Appendix 3, to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

> 6.19.1 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; and
>
> 6.19.2 Where the school has decided as part of its anti-bullying policy that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable. Such circumstances will be determined in line with the relevant teacher's professional judgement.

6.20   In each of the circumstances at (a) and (b) above, the recording template Appendix 3 must be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable. It should also be noted that the timeline for recording bullying behaviour in the recording template Appendix 3 does not in any way preclude the relevant teacher from consulting the Principal or Deputy Principal at an earlier stage in relation to a case.

6.21   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.

6.22   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.

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

The relevant teacher will use the following intervention strategies as befits the circumstances, including the age of the child/ren involved and the number of children involved. This is not an exhaustive list – these approaches will be supplemented/amended in the light of experience and in the spirit of the anti-bullying policy and procedures.

- Teacher interviews with 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/s to support school interventions
- Circle Time
- Restorative interviews
- Restorative conferencing

- In cases where a school has serious concerns in relation to managing the behaviour of a pupil, the advice of the National Education Psychological Service (NEPS) should be sought.
- In relation to bullying in schools, 'Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011 (Children First) and the 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools' provide that in situations where 'the incident is serious and where the behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive, the school must consult the HSE Children and Family Social Services with a view to drawing up an appropriate response, such as a management plan'.

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. Review

This policy was reviewed by the Board of Management on 22nd May 2023 and reflects minor updates. It is to be implemented with immediate effect.

11. Communication

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 and the Patron if requested. *(Available from date of implementation)*

12. Implementation

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.

Signed: _____   Date: _22/5/2023_
Orla O'Grady Walshe – Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: _Frances Mullin_   Date: _22.05.2023_
Frances Mullin – Principal & Secretary to the Board of Management

Date of next review: *ordinarily in the latter part of the Spring term each year or early in the Summer term.*