

Scoil Náisiúnta Cúil an tSúdaire 2
Sandylane National School
Portarlinton, Co. Laois



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 (TUSLA), the Board of Management of Sandylane NS 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.

Children First National Guidance 2017 and the Anti-Bullying Procedures provide that in cases of serious instances of bullying where the behaviour is regarded as possibly abusive, a referral may need to be made to Tusla or An Garda Síochána as appropriate. Where school personnel have concerns about a child arising from alleged bullying behaviour but are not sure whether to report the matter to TUSLA, the designated liaison person shall seek advice from Tusla in accordance with the procedures set out in Chapter 5 of Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017.

2. The Board of Management of Sandylane NS 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 (See Appendix 1) 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; involves collaboration among and between staff & pupils 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 addresses 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)
- Ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying policy.

Scoil Náisiúnta Cúil an tSúdaire 2
Sandylane National School
Portarlinton, Co. Laois



3. In accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools bullying is defined as follows:

'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
- ✓ 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 and Appendix 1 of this document.

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

- Class teacher(s) initially
 - Deputy Principal
 - The principal thereafter if necessary
- Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

5. The following education and prevention strategies, (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber- bullying, 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*):

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

Scoil Náisiúnta Cúil an tSúdaire 2
Sandylane National School
Portarlinton, Co. Laois



- 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.
 - School wide awareness-raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) 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.
 - Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school displayed publicly in classrooms and in common areas of the school.
 - The school's Anti-Bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parent(s)/guardian(s) of incoming pupils are told that it's available on the school's website, with a hard copy available on request from the school office.
 - The school's Anti-Bullying policy will also be available to view in the Principal's Office and secretary's office.
 - The implementation of regular whole school awareness measures may include:
 - Friendship Week (Children will be taught strategies to help resolve conflict e.g. SALT- Stop, Ask, Listen. Talk)
 - Questionnaires/surveys in senior classes
 - Agreed whole school time-tabling of lessons on anti-bullying
 - Assemblies
 - NEPS programmes e.g. Friends For Life, Zippy's Friends, Get Up Stand Up
 - Encourage 'Kind Hands, Kind Feet, Kind Words'
 - Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. 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 or to a trusted teacher in the school.
 - Anti-bully or Niggle or Worry Box/Monster within each classroom
 - Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
 - Administer a confidential questionnaire to pupils in senior classes.
 - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.

Implementation of curricula

- The full implementation of the SPHE, RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.

Scoil Náisiúnta Cúil an tSúdaire 2
Sandylane National School
Portarlinton, Co. Laois



- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes, e.g. Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme, Prim-Ed Anti-Bullying - Identify, Prevent, Cope, Anti-bullying Campaign.ie, Be Safe-Be Web Wise, HTML Heroes, Prim-Ed Cyber-Bullying Programme "Cool School", Friends For Life etc.
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes. These lessons delivered by the Community Guard, 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 will implement the advice in "Sexual Orientation advice for schools" (RSE Primary, PDST Information Booklet).
- Educating pupils on bullying and its affects could be extended into many other areas of the curriculum such as The Primary Language Curriculum, Art, Drama, Religious Education, and Physical Education. Co-operation and group enterprise can be promoted through team sports, school clubs and societies as well as through practical subjects.
- Sporting activities in particular can provide excellent opportunities for channelling and learning how to control aggression.

Links to other policies

- Code of Behaviour
- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Special Educational Needs
- ICT and Acceptable Use Policy
- Health and Safety

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,

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). With this in mind the school's procedures are as follows:

The School Recognises that

- Early Intervention is crucial
- A calm, unemotional problem-solving approach should be adopted
- Incidents are best investigated outside the classroom situation
- Humiliation of victim or bully should be avoided at all costs
- Interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned
- Other pupils can sometimes provide useful information
- Dealing effectively with conflict in a non-aggressive manner is setting an example for pupils

Scoil Náisiúnta Cúil an tSúdaire 2
Sandylane National School
Portarlinton, Co. Laois



- Parental input and co-operation is valuable
- Both victim and bully need help

Reporting bullying behaviour

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to the relevant teacher in the school.
- A suspicion of bullying should be raised with the relevant class teacher first and then if necessary with the Principal.
- Parents are encouraged to make an appointment to speak with the relevant class teacher if they suspect their child is being bullied.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as Special Needs Assistants (SNA's), secretaries, cleaners or caretakers must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them or mentioned to them to the relevant teacher.

Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Incidents

- (i) In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher(s) will exercise his/her/their professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred, what type if it has and how best the situation might be resolved
- (ii) All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher(s). In that way, pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying, they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly
- (iii) 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
- (iv) It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset
- (v) Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents
- (vi) Where possible, incidents should be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved
- (vii) All interviews 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
- (viii) A written record of discussions will be kept and the pupil/pupil(s) may be asked to give his/her own written account, if this is appropriate.

Scoil Náisiúnta Cúil an tSúdaire 2
Sandylane National School
Portarlinton, Co. Laois



(ix) When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher(s) should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner

Questions that may be asked when responding to challenging behaviour include:

- What happened?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- What have your thoughts been since?
- Who has been affected by what you did?
- In what way have they been affected?
- What do you think needs to happen next?

Questions that may be asked when responding to those harmed include:

- What happened?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- What have your thoughts been since?
- How has this affected you/others?
- What has been the hardest thing for you?

(xi) If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements.

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

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

(xiv) In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher(s) that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (referencing the school policy). The school will afford parent(s)/guardian(s) the 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

(xv) Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's Anti-Bullying policy and the Code of Behaviour and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;

(xvi) 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 parents and the school;

Scoil Náisiúnta Cúil an tSúdaire 2
Sandylane National School
Portarlinton, Co. Laois



Follow-up

- 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;
 - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardian(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 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:

Noting and reporting of bullying behaviour is to be documented using the *Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour* (Appendix 3). All records must be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour will adhere to the following:

(i) While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher(s), the relevant teacher(s) will use his/her/their professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same

(ii) If it is established by the relevant teacher(s) that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher(s) must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved

(iii) The relevant teacher(s) must use the recording template at Appendix 3 to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances

- a. 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
- b. 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.

Scoil Náisiúnta Cúil an tSúdaire 2
Sandylane National School
Portarlinton, Co. Laois



In each of the circumstances at (a) and (b) above, the recording template at 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 at Appendix 3 does not in any way preclude the relevant teacher from consulting the Principal or Deputy Principal at an earlier stage to a case.

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows (see Section 6.8.16 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.
- SALT Conflict Resolution Programme
- Circle Time activities
- SPHE Programmes e.g. Walk Tall, Zippy's Friends,
- Weaving Wellbeing
- Amber Flag Initiatives – including celebrating Friendship week
- NEPS – Friends For Life, Incredible Years, Get Up. Stand Up etc.
- Barnardo's Roots of Empathy programme
- Play / Art Therapy
- The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)
- If pupils require counselling or further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.
- Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a relevant teacher.

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 reviewed and updated by the Board of Management of Sandylane National

Scoil Náisiúnta Cúil an tSúdaire 2
Sandylane National School
Portarlinton, Co. Laois



School on 18th October 2022.

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website. It is also available on request. 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 and published on the school website and is available on request. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: Deirdre Clune

Date: 18/10/2022

(Principal)

Signed: [Signature]

Date: 18th October 2022

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date of next review: Autumn 2023