

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) 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;
- effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;

Uimhir Rolla/Roll Number: 18203N Tel: 057 8643281

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- (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:

‘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

Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

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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 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
- 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 the teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
 - Hand note up with homework.

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- 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 the school's **Acceptable Use Policy** in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored and the pupils' use of mobile phones is strictly prohibited.

Implementation of curricula

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- The full implementation of the **SPHE** curriculum and the **RSE** and **Stay Safe** Programmes.
- **Continuous Professional Development** for staff if needed in delivering these programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes, e.g. Stay Safe Programme, Weaving Wellbeing.
- Targeted delivery of lessons on **Cyberbullying** and **Diversity and Interculturalism** at the appropriate class levels.
- 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 effects 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
- Acceptable Use Policy Governing Access to Internet
- Health and Safety

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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
- 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.
- All reports will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher or if appropriate the classroom teacher of the children involved.
- 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

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(iii) Parents and pupils are required to cooperate 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.

(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.

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(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;

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.

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7. 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.

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.

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)

Bullied pupils:

- Ending the bullying behaviour,
- Changing the school culture to foster more respect for bullied pupils and all pupils,
- Changing the school culture to foster greater empathy towards and support for bullied pupils,
- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the awareness-raising programme
- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the speedy identification of those responsible and speedy resolution of bullying situations,

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- After resolution, enabling bullied pupils to complete a victim-impact statement.
- Helping bullied pupils raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school).
- If pupils require counselling or further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same, i.e. NEPS, HSE, Family Counselling Services.

Bullying pupils:

- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are not blamed or punished and get a 'clean sheet,'
- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are doing the right and honourable thing and giving them praise for this,
- Recommend adequate counselling facilities available to help those who need to learn other ways of meeting their needs besides violating the rights of others,
- Helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school),
- Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils' feelings of self-worth,
- In dealing with negative behaviour in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child,
- In dealing with bullying behaviour seeking resolution and offering a fresh start with a 'clean sheet' and no blame in return for keeping a promise to reform.

8. Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils:

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

9. Prevention of Harassment

The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all 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.

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10. This policy was reviewed and updated by the Board of Management of Sandylane National School on 12th December 2023.

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: _____

Date: _____

(Principal)

Signed: _____

Date: _____

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date of next review: Autumn 2024

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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 in 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.



Appendix 2: Types of Bullying

The following are some of the types of bullying behaviour that can occur amongst pupils:

Physical aggression: This behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While pupils often engage in ‘mess fights’, they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain

Intimidation: Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation. It may be based on the use of very aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon. Particularly upsetting can be a facial expression which conveys aggression and/or dislike.

Isolation/exclusion and other relational bullying: This occurs where a certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or all of the class group. This practice is usually initiated by the person engaged in bullying behaviour and can be difficult to detect. It may be accompanied by writing insulting remarks about the pupil in public places, by passing around notes about or drawings of the pupil or by whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard. Relational bullying occurs when a person’s attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. One of the most common forms includes control: ‘Do this or I won’t be your friend anymore’(implied or stated), a group ganging up against one person (girl or boy), non-verbal gesturing, malicious gossip, spreading rumours about a person or giving them the ‘silent treatment’.

Cyber-bullying: This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, email, instant messaging (IM), apps, gaming sites, chat rooms and other online technologies. Being the target of inappropriate or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying. As cyber-bullying uses technology to perpetrate bullying behaviour and does not require face-to face-contact, cyber-bullying can occur at any time (day or night). Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyber-bullying. For example, a target may be sent homophobic text messages or pictures may be posted with negative comments about a person’s sexuality, appearance etc.

Name calling: Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) that hurts, insults or humiliates should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name calling of this type refers to physical appearance, e.g. size or clothes worn. Accent or distinctive voice characteristics may attract negative attention. Academic ability can also provoke name calling. This tends to operate at two extremes. There are those who are singled out for attention because they are perceived to be weak academically. At the other extreme there are those who, because they are perceived as high achievers are also targeted

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Damage to property: Personal property can be the focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, school books and other learning material or interference with a pupil's locker or bicycle. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden

Extortion: Demands for money may be made, often accompanied by threats (sometimes carried out in the event of the targeted pupil not delivering on the demand). A pupil may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to another who is engaged in bullying behaviour.

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