

St. Anne's N.S. Policy on Bullying

St. Anne's school community 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 and endeavors to cultivate an environment free from bullying.

Every report of bullying is treated seriously and dealt with, having due regard for the well being 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 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 behavior guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of **St. Anne's** has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behavior. 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 recognizes 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 behavior:
 - 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 behavior 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
 - Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;

- Supports for staff;
 - Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behavior (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 behavior, 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 behavior are included in the definition of bullying:

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
- cyber-bullying and
- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behavior, 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 behavior.

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 behavior.

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

This definition includes a wide range of behaviour, whether verbal or written, whether physical or social, whether targeting person or property, whether carried out directly or indirectly or through any electronic or other medium, which could harm a pupil or undermine her/his self-esteem or self-confidence.

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

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 Teachers" for investigating and dealing with bullying in this school is/are the mainstream class teachers where the complaint has occurred and Learning Support & Resource teachers if the incident has come before them.
5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity based bullying) used by the school are as follows:
- The anti-bullying module of the SPHE programme, **Zippy's Friends**, Friends for Life, Stay Safe, PrimEd Bullying series - all classes, the use of novels in the senior classes that have a bullying theme, Alive O and anti-bullying websites e.g. <http://antibullyingcampaign.ie/>.
 - At least three awareness-raising exercises per school year for each class group pro-actively explaining the nature and variety, causes, consequences and unacceptability of bullying. eg
 1. **A bullying awareness day for pupils & paents.**

2. **Hold a Friendship Day/Week.**
3. **At the beginning of each school year the pupils help formulate the class rules**

Other initiatives from the website www.antibullyingcampaign.ie

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 (to be introduced if deemed necessary).

Through presentations or other exercises, the school staff and parents/guardians are made aware of the nature of bullying and the signs that might indicate that a pupil is being bullied. They are encouraged to be vigilant in watching out for signs of bullying and to report any suspicion of bullying they may have to the "Relevant Teacher".

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

In the school's daily and routine life, the ways in which people interact with each other significantly affect each person's sense of self-worth, belonging and well-being.

The fostering of high-quality interpersonal relationships among teachers, students, parents and ancillary staff is a responsibility shared by everyone.

All members of the school community have a role to play in the prevention of bullying.

Responsibilities of Board of Management

The Board of Management is responsible for ensuring that all members of the school community are enabled to deal effectively with bullying. The Board is committed to providing time and resources for the implementation of the policy. The Board will ensure that proper supervisory and monitoring measures are in place to prevent bullying and to deal with incidents appropriately as they arise.

Responsibilities of School Staff

- To acknowledge that bullying is a shared responsibility within the school
- To draw upon Restorative Justice practices, taking into account the age of the students
- To implement prevention and intervention strategies which build and maintain a safe learning environment for the whole school community
- To empower students to deal with conflict in constructive ways using Restorative Justice practices
- To take all reports of bullying seriously and to report them to the Principal if warranted
- To document any serious bullying incidents using the Bullying Incident Report Form.

Responsibilities of Pupils

- To show consideration, respect and support towards others
- To be able to identify bullying behaviour
- To not bully others
- To tell if they are being bullied or if they see someone else being bullied
- To engage in responsible reporting when witnessing or experiencing bullying behaviour
- To feel empathy for targeted members of the school community and, as a result, take safe and sensible action as a bystander.

Responsibilities of Parents

- To support the school in the implementation of the policy
- To watch out for signs that their child may be bullied

- To speak to the class teacher if their child is being bullied or they suspect that this is happening
- To instruct their children to tell if they are bullied or if they have seen other students being bullied
- To notify the school if they think that their child is displaying bullying behaviour and to work with the school in addressing this problem
- To approach the school directly rather than a student, or the parent of a student at the school, to intervene in behavioural issues.

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 'Relevant Teacher' investigates all instances of reported or suspected bullying behaviour, whether these take place within the school or outside it, with a view to establishing the facts and bringing any such behaviour to an end.
- The School, through the 'Relevant Teacher' reserves the right to ask any pupil to write an account of what happened, as part of an investigation. This will be a standard procedure.
- Pupils who are alleged to have been involved in bullying behaviour are interviewed by the 'Relevant Teacher' to establish the nature and extent of the behaviour and any reasons for it. In the event that they have been involved in bullying behaviour they are asked to sign a binding promise that they will treat all pupils fairly, equally and respectfully including the targeted pupil(s).
- The 'Relevant Teacher' does not apportion blame but rather treats bullying behaviour as a "mistake" that can and must be remedied. S/he emphasises that the intention is not to punish perpetrators but to talk to them, to explain how harmful and hurtful bullying is and to seek a promise that it will stop. If that promise is forthcoming and is honoured there will be no penalty and that will be the end of the matter. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying, they are not telling tales, but behaving responsibly.
- When an investigation is completed and/or a bullying situation is resolved the 'Relevant Teacher' will complete a report, to include the findings of the investigation, the strategy adopted and the outcome of the intervention, as well as any other relevant information.
- If a pupil has signed such a promise but then chooses to break that promise and continue the bullying behaviour, this can then no longer be considered a "mistake." In this event parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed and requested to countersign their daughter/son's promise. **Breach of this additional promise** by further bullying behaviour is regarded as a very grave matter and a serious sanction may be imposed by the school authorities.
- All documentation regarding bullying incidents and their resolution is retained securely in the school.

Sanctions:

Where a pupil has been found to be engaged in bullying behaviour, has formally promised to stop and has broken that promise, any of the following sanctions may be imposed:

- S/he may be required to sign another promise, this time countersigned by a parent/guardian;
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) may be contacted by the 'Relevant Teacher' and informed of the nature and extent of the bullying behaviour with a view to agreeing a strategy whereby a promise to end the bullying behaviour would be honoured;

- Parent(s)/guardian(s) may be invited to a meeting with the '**Relevant Teacher**' and the Principal and the pupil may be suspended from school **in line with the school's Code of Behaviour Policy**.
7. The case may be referred to the Board of Management and the pupil may be expelled from the school **in line with the school's Code of Behaviour Policy**
8. **The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:**
- Bullied pupils:
 - Ending the bullying behaviour
 - Ensuring that the school culture fosters respect for all pupils and clearly shows empathy towards and support for those experiencing bullying
 - Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through awareness-raising programmes
 - Supporting the targeted pupil through the speedy identification of those responsible and speedy resolution of bullying situations
 - After resolution, enabling bullied pupils to access continued support from school staff/resources
 - 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).
 - **Implementing a 'Buddy System' if considered appropriate**
 - Bullying pupils:
 - Making it clear that bullying pupils who recognize their mistake and work with the process **are not blamed or punished and get a "clean sheet,"** and let them know that they are doing the right and honorable thing and give them praise for this
 - Helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills
 - Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance **pupils' feelings of self-worth**
 - In dealing with negative behavior in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child

All complaints against staff are handled under the agreed INTO/CPSMA Complaints Procedure.

9. **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. The Board of Management will be informed and updated of any bullying complaints/incidents through periodic summary reports termly.
10. The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps as 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.

11. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on ____/____/____.
12. 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 of Education and Skills and to 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, published on the school website and provided to the **Parents' Association**. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills and to the patron if requested.

Signed: _____ Date: ____/____/____
(Principal)

Signed: _____ Date: ____/____/____
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date of next review: ____/____/____

Awareness and prevention of Cyber-Bullying

UNDERSTANDING CYBER-BULLYING:

- Cyber bullying is the use of ICT (usually a mobile phone and / or the internet) to abuse another person
- It can take place anywhere and involve many people
- Anybody can be targeted including pupils and school staff
- It can include threats, intimidation, harassment, cyber-stalking, vilification, defamation, exclusion, peer rejection, impersonation, unauthorized publication of private information or images etc.
- While bullying involves a repetition of unwelcome behaviour the **Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools, September 2013**, states:

2.1.3. In addition, in the context of these procedures 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.

WHAT IS CYBER-BULLYING?

There are many types of cyber-bullying. The more common types are:

1. **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)
2. **Picture/video-clips via mobile phone cameras** – images sent to others to make the victim feel threatened or embarrassed
3. **Mobile phone calls** – silent calls, abusive messages or stealing the victim's phone and using it to harass others, to make them believe the victim is responsible
4. **Emails** – threatening or bullying emails, often sent using a pseudonym or somebody else's name
5. **Chat room bullying** – menacing or upsetting responses to children or young people when they are in a web-based chat room
6. **Instant messaging (IM)** – unpleasant messages sent while children conduct real-time conversations online using MSM (Microsoft Messenger), Yahoo Chat or similar tools
7. **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.

Explanation of slang terms used when referring to cyber-bullying activity:

1. **'Flaming'**: Online fights using electronic messages with angry and vulgar language
2. **'Harassment'**: Repeatedly sending offensive, rude, and insulting messages
3. **'Cyber Stalking'**: Repeatedly sending messages that include threats of harm or are highly intimidating or engaging in other on-line activities that make a person afraid for his or her own safety
4. **'Denigration'**: 'Dissing' someone online. Sending or posting cruel gossip or rumors about a person to damage his or her reputation or friendships
5. **'Impersonation'**: Pretending to be someone else and sending or posting material online that makes someone look bad, gets her/him in trouble or danger, or damages her/his reputation or friendships
6. **'Outing and Trickery'**: Tricking someone into revealing secret or embarrassing information which is then shared online
7. **'Exclusion'**: Intentionally excluding someone from an on-line group, like a 'buddy list'

This list is not exhaustive and the terms used continue to change.

Through our anti-bullying policy we aim to:

- To ensure that pupils, staff and parents understand what cyber bullying is and how it can be combated
- To ensure that practices and procedures are agreed to prevent incidents of cyber-bullying
- To ensure that reported incidents of cyber bullying are dealt with effectively and quickly.

PROCEDURES TO PREVENT CYBER-BULLYING:

- Staff, pupils, parents and Board of Management (BoM) will be made aware of issues surrounding cyber bullying through the use of appropriate awareness-raising exercises
- Pupils will learn about cyber bullying through Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), circle time, assemblies, friendship week activities and other curriculum projects
- The school will engage a speaker to facilitate a workshop on cyber bullying for 5th and 6th classes.
- Staff CPD (Continuous Professional Development) will assist in learning about current technologies
- Parents will be provided with information and advice on how to combat cyber bullying
- Pupils will sign an Acceptable Use of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) contract
- Parents will be expected to sign an Acceptable Use of ICT contract also and to discuss its meaning with their children
- Pupils and parents will be urged to report all incidents of cyber bullying to the school
- **All reports of cyber bullying will be investigated, recorded, stored in the Principal's Office and monitored regularly**
- Procedures in our school Anti-bullying Policy shall apply
- The police will be contacted in cases of actual or suspected illegal content

INFORMATION FOR PUPILS:

If you are being bullied by phone or on the Internet:

- Remember, bullying is never your fault. It can be stopped and it can usually be traced.
- **Don't ignore the bullying. Tell someone you trust, such as a teacher or parent or call an advice line.**
- **Try to keep calm. If you are frightened, try to show it as little as possible. Don't get angry,** it will only make the person bullying you more likely to continue.
- **Don't give out your personal details online** – if you are in a chat room, do not say where you live, the school you go to, your email address etc. All these things can help someone who wants to harm you to build up a picture about you.
- Keep and save any bullying emails, text messages or images. Then you can show them to a parent or teacher as evidence.
- If you can, make a note of the time and date bullying messages or images were sent, and note any details about the sender
- There is plenty of online advice on how to react to cyber bullying. For example, ie.reachout.com and www.wiredsafety.org have some useful tips.

Text/video messaging

- You can easily stop receiving text messages for a while by turning-off incoming messages for a couple of days. This might stop the person texting you by making them **believe you've** changed your phone number
- If the bullying persists, you can change your phone number. Ask your mobile service provider about this.
- **Don't reply** to abusive or worrying text or video messages.
- Your mobile service provider will have a number for you to ring or text to report phone bullying. Visit their website for details.
- **Don't delete messages from cyber bullies. You don't have to read them, but you should keep them as evidence.**

Useful Websites

www.spunout.ie

www.kidsmart.org.uk/beingsmart

www.bbc.co.uk./schools/bullying

www.childline.ie/index.php/support/bullying/1395

www.chatdanger.com

www.kidpower.org

www.childnet.int.org

www.antibullying.net

<http://ie.reachout.com>

www.abc.tcd.ie

www.sticksandstones.ie

Appendix 1

Bullying can take a number of forms. These may include any of the following (this list is not exhaustive):

- **Repeated aggressive behaviour/attitude/body language, for example:**
 - Shouting and uncontrolled anger,
 - Personal insults,
 - Verbal abuse,
 - Offensive language directed at an individual,
 - Continually shouting or dismissing others,
 - Public verbal attacks/criticism,
 - Domineering behaviour,
 - Open aggression,
 - Offensive gestures and unwanted physical contact.
- **Intimidation, either physical, psychological or emotional, for example:**
 - Treating in a dictatorial manner,
 - Ridicule,
 - Persistent slugging,
 - Deliberate staring with the intent to discomfort.
 - Persistent rudeness in behaviour and attitude toward a particular individual.
 - Asking inappropriate questions/making inappropriate comments re. personal life/family
 - Asking inappropriate questions/making inappropriate comments re. social life or school work.
- **Interference with property, for example:**
 - Stealing/damaging books or equipment
 - Stealing/damaging clothing or other property
 - Demanding money with menaces
 - Persistently moving, hiding or interfering with property
 - Marking/defacing property
- **Undermining/Public or Private Humiliation, for example:**
 - Condescending tone,
 - Deliberately withholding significant information and resources,
 - Writing of anonymous notes,
 - Malicious, disparaging or demeaning comments,
 - Malicious tricks/derogatory jokes,
 - Knowingly spreading rumours,
 - Belittling others' efforts, their enthusiasm or their new ideas,**
 - Derogatory or offensive nicknames (name-calling),
 - Using electronic or other media for any of the above (cyber bullying),
 - Disrespectfully mimicking a particular individual in his/her absence,
 - Deliberately refusing to address issues focusing instead on the person.
- **Ostracising or isolating, for example:**
 - Deliberately marginalising an individual
 - Deliberately preventing a person from joining a group,
 - Deliberately preventing from joining in an activity, schoolwork-related or recreational
 - Blaming a pupil for things s/he did not do.

Appendix 3 Template for recording bullying behaviour

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name _____ Class _____

2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

3. Source of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es))*

Pupil concerned	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Pupil	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))*

Playground	<input type="checkbox"/>
Classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corridor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Toilets	<input type="checkbox"/>
School Bus	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

--

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

Physical Aggression	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cyber-bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>
Damage to Property	<input type="checkbox"/>	Intimidation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Isolation/Exclusion	<input type="checkbox"/>	Malicious Gossip	<input type="checkbox"/>
Name Calling	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

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

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

--

9. Details of actions taken

--

Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

*** Note:** The categories listed in the tables 3, 4 & 6 are suggested and schools may add to or amend these to suit their own circumstances.

Restorative Practices

An important part of our school approach to behaviour is the concept of 'Restorative Practices'. Our Behaviour Policy is focused on the positive aspects of behaviour rather than on punishments or sanctions, although these are included in the appropriate section of our Behaviour Policy.

We promote the notion of a school community where everything we do is based on mutual respect. '*We sail our ship together*'.

Pupils are expected firstly to respect themselves and then to treat each other and staff members with respect. Teachers and staff members are expected to treat children with respect. We take the view that pupils (other than some pupils with very special needs) choose their behaviour to a great degree – they always have an alternative. Therefore, they must take responsibility for their behaviour. If they treat others poorly, they may be acting out their own anger and frustrations, but they can also learn to choose more positively. We ask children to treat others as they want to be treated themselves.

The Rules of Anger are: *It is ok to be angry.*

When I become angry:

- I don't hurt others /
- I don't hurt myself
- I don't hurt (damage) property
- I talk about how I feel.

Mending Relationships – Rationale:

If I become angry and hurt someone with my words or actions, I must try to make things right. I will do this by talking with the person I hurt, and I must be prepared to offer an apology, and I must be prepared to guarantee that I will not hurt that person again. I must try to realise myself what it feels like to be hurt with words or with actions and I must try to recognise the damage that my poor behaviour can do to others. In this way, I help myself to mend and I help my victim to mend.

What does 'Restorative Practice' involve for our school?

Restorative Practices is a process to involve, to the extent possible, those who have a stake in a specific offence and to collectively identify and address harms, needs and obligations, in order to heal and put things as right as possible. Resource : www.transformingconflict.org

Restorative Practice:

- Creates an ethos of respect, inclusion, accountability and taking responsibility
- Creates a commitment to relationships, impartiality, being non-judgemental
- Encourages collaboration, empowerment and emotional articulacy

Key Skills of Restorative Discipline are:

- Active listening
- Facilitating dialogue and problem-solving
- Listening to and expressing emotion
- Supporting others in taking ownership of problems

An important element in Restorative Practice is Fair Process:

Expectations - everyone knows what is expected of them

Engagement - involves individuals in decisions/listens to views

Explanation - clarify how decisions are reached

'Individuals are most likely to trust and co-operate freely with systems – whether they themselves win or lose by those systems – when fair process is observed'.

Kim & Mauborgne , Harvard Business Review, July - August 1997

People who have been harmed need:

- Someone to listen to my story
- Time to calm down
- A chance to ask – why me? What did I do to deserve that?
- The person concerned to understand and acknowledge the impact of their behaviour on me
- A sincere spontaneous apology
- Things put right, if possible
- Reassurance it won't happen again

Offenders are asked the following questions:

- What happened?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- What have you thought about since?
- Who has been affected by what you have done? In what way?
- What do you need to do to make things right?

School Group Conferences can be held to deal with issues:

- Offenders tell what they did
- Everyone talks about what impact this has had on them
- The group reaches a shared understanding of the harm that has been done
- The group negotiates an agreement about how to repair the damage and minimise further harm

The staff has devised hand held question cards based on the above principles which are envisaged as tools to help staff and pupils establish restorative practices as the norm when resolving conflict.

