



St. Brendan's NS Anti-Bullying Policy

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the *code of behaviour guidelines* issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of St. Brendan's 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.

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 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 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*.

4. The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:

- 1. All class teachers**
- 2. SEN teachers in consultation with class teachers**
- 3. Principal and/or Deputy Principal in consultation with class teacher.**

5. The 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):

- All classes will do The Stay Safe Programme every second year.
- The RSE programme will run on alternate years.
- Self-esteem and caring for myself and others are major strand units of the SPHE curriculum in each class.
- Incredible Years, Weaving Wellbeing, Fun Friends and Friends for Life have been adopted throughout the school. We have a number of teachers trained in this area by NEPS and SCP. Our Principal is trained as a trainer in Incredible Years and several staff members are undergoing training as part of the supports to newly designated DEIS schools.
- Expert speakers will be regularly invited to the school (at minimum, every second year) to speak to parents and pupils about bullying and cyberbullying.
- There is a section in our Parent's Handbook documenting our anti-bullying procedures and what parents can do to support.
- Pupils in middle and senior classes will get an opportunity to use the cyberbullying materials on the www.webwise.ie and www.saferinternetday.ie websites every February in conjunction with Safer Internet Day.
- SCP project workers will work with specific groups where bullying is deemed to be an issue, as targeted each year by the principal and class teachers. Programmes such as Friendship groups, modules on self-esteem, resilience and transfer to secondary school all contain elements of antibullying awareness and strategies to cope.
- Foróige provide afterschool modules to pupils from middles and senior classes each year, where cyberbullying, self-esteem and coping strategies are explored through role-play and activities.
- Bullying is regularly discussed at school assemblies. Pupils are made aware of our CARA (Caring and Respectful Attitude) programme and the school rules are presented in easy to understand bullet points. Pupils throughout the school are rewarded for a kind and caring attitude in accordance with the Incredible Years programme.
- Antibullying posters are displayed throughout the school corridors.



- The school is in the process of adopting Restorative Practices. Staff have been introduced to this process through staff meetings and in-house training. Further training will continue.

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 :

A pupil or parent may bring a bullying concern to any teacher in the school. This must be reported to the class teacher (relevant teacher) in the first instance. Anonymous reports of bullying should also be brought to the class teacher initially.

The school will adopt the following approach:

- 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);
- 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;
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. 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**;
- **Non-teaching staff** such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;
- **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;
- It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset;
- Teachers should take a **calm, unemotional problem-solving approach** when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents;
- Incidents are generally best **investigated outside the classroom** situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
- 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;
- 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**;
- 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;
- Each member of a group should be **supported through the possible pressures** that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher;
- It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to **write down their account** of the incident(s);



- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher 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 (by reference to the school policy). The school should give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils;
- 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 efforts should be made to try to get him/her to **see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied**;
- It must also be 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;
- 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. This can have a therapeutic effect;
- 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 in the **anti-bullying log kept in Room 9**. All records must be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. The relevant teacher will use his/her professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same;
- 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;
- 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**;
- 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**.

Recording:

- (ii) If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher 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 must use the **recording template** to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:
 - 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



- 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 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 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.
- It is also important to note that bullying behaviour can be part of a continuum of behaviour rather than a stand-alone issue and in some cases behaviour may escalate beyond that which can be described as bullying to serious physical or sexual assault or harassment. To ensure that any such cases are dealt with appropriately, the school's anti-bullying policy must provide for appropriate linkages with the overall code of behaviour and provide for referral to be made to relevant external agencies and authorities where appropriate. 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".
- 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 Social Services and/or Gardaí as appropriate**.
- 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**.

Supports for pupils affected by bullying

- A programme of support for pupils who have been bullied must be in place in consultation with the Principal. Such pupils may need counselling and/or opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed.
- A programme of support for those pupils involved in bullying behaviour must also be part of the school's intervention process. Pupils involved in bullying behaviour need assistance on an ongoing basis. For those with low self-esteem, opportunities should be developed to increase feelings of self-worth. It is, therefore, important that the learning strategies applied within the school allow for the enhancement of the pupil's self-worth.
- Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others. The Principal will contact HSE or NEPS as appropriate in this instance.

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- Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour should be encouraged to discuss them with teachers.

8. Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils

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

9. Prevention of Harassment

The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of pupils or staff or the harassment of pupils or staff on any of the nine grounds specified i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

10. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 20th November 2013, revised in February 2017 and again in Oct 2021.

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

Signed: *Noll Rooney*
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: *Marie Hurley*
(Principal)

Date: 13/10/2022

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Date of next review: Oct 2023

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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	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

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

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other	

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

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

Physical Aggression		Cyber-bullying	
Damage to Property		Intimidation	

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Isolation/Exclusion		Malicious Gossip	
Name Calling		Other (specify)	

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.

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Appendix A: Framework to support schools in reflecting on policy and practice in accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013)*

Areas	Characteristics of a school with a positive school culture and environment
Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Is welcoming of difference and diversity and fosters inclusivity ● Encourages respect, trust, care, consideration and support for others ● Takes particular care of its 'at risk' pupils ● Uses its monitoring systems to facilitate early intervention where necessary and responds to the needs, fears or anxieties of individuals in a sensitive manner ● Has the capacity to change in response to pupils' needs
Attitudes and values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Promotes social responsibility, tolerance and understanding amongst all its members both in school and out of school ● Acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment ● Raises awareness amongst the entire school community (including school management, teachers and other staff members, pupils, parents, volunteers etc.) that bullying is unacceptable behaviour and encourages pupils to disclose and discuss bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment, and responds appropriately ● Is open, supportive and encourages pupils to disclose and communicate bullying behaviour ● Identifies aspects of the curriculum through which positive and lasting influences can be exerted towards forming pupils' attitudes and values
Education and prevention strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implements a range of education and prevention strategies to raise awareness of and address bullying ● Ensures comprehensive supervision and monitoring through which all aspects of school activity are kept under observation ● Has a range of education and prevention strategies in place to explicitly deal with the issue of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including homophobic bullying, transphobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs ● Ensures that parents and pupils have a clearly defined role and responsibility in helping to prevent and address school-based bullying behaviour and to deal with any negative impact within the school of bullying behaviour that occurs elsewhere ● Works with and through the various local agencies in countering all forms of bullying and anti-social behaviour ● Monitors the effectiveness of the education and prevention strategies in place
Relationships and interactions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Promotes respectful relationships across the school community ● Builds empathy and respect in pupils ● Encourages positive relationships that build empathy amongst peers – pupil / pupil and teacher / teacher and between and among groups ● Encourages its staff, under the leadership of the principal, to act in preventing bullying / aggressive behaviour by any member of the school community



Appendix 2 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.
- Support the establishment and work of student councils.

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