**St. Seachnall’s NS**

**Anti-Bullying Policy**

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. Seachnall’s National School 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.

The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils. The school community strongly believes that respect by all, for all, at all times must be promoted. Children are taught that society is made up of a variety of different people, all of whom deserve our respect and all of whom have the right to be treated with respect.

The Board of Management and the staff of St. Seachnall’s NS are 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.

1. 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*.

**Relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:**

* The class teacher(s) initially
* The principal thereafter if necessary
* Any teacher or staff member may act as the relevant teacher where circumstances warrant, e.g. teacher on duty if the incident occurs on the yard.

**Investigating and dealing with incidents**

The ‘Relevant Teacher’ investigates all instances of reported or suspected bullying behaviour, with a view to establishing the facts and bringing any such behaviour to an end.

* When analyzing 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.
* Parent(s)/guardian(s) 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.
* Where possible, incidents should be investigated outside the classroom, with sensitivity and due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned.
* 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 and does not necessarily imply that a pupil is guilty of misbehaviour.
* 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.
* If the teacher considers that the incident constitutes a case of bullying he/she will record the details on the standard form for recording bullying behaviour. The principal is then informed and given a copy of the form.

The principal will review the details, speak to the children involved and follow the procedures outlined below. Contact will be made with the parents if it is considered appropriate and sanctions may be imposed.

Stage 1

* Friendship week to be held in September leading to all classes agreeing to a positive statement of respectful behaviour and a commitment to avoid bullying behaviour. All pupils sign an individual contract to adhere to the code. Work with Infant and Junior Classes will be based on art work and class signatures.
* If during the year, a pupil engages in bullying behaviour they will be reminded of the contract and asked to add to it details of how they broke the contract, why they behaved this way and state what they must do to ensure it does not happen again.

**Stage 2:**  The pupil will then be referred to the Principal who may give a verbal or written reprimand including advice on how to improve.

On reprimand the child may be separated from peers using a “time out” zone e.g. table or chair. The time period will depend on class level. The following is suggested:

* Infants – not more than 5 minutes
* 1st/2nd – not more than 7 minutes
* 3rd/4th – not more than 10 minutes
* 5th/6th – not more than 15 minutes

**\* In the case of more serious misbehaviour stages 1 & 2 may be skipped.**

**Stage 3:** If incidents of bullying continue the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the responsible child/children will be invited to a meeting with the ‘Relevant Teacher’ and the Principal to discuss the issue. Sanctions will be considered including the option of suspending the pupil from school for up to three days. The issue to be reviewed in a follow-up meeting after an agreed length of time.

**Stage 4:** If the bullying continues the case will be referred to the Board of Management. Further suspension may be considered and the pupil may be expelled from the school.

**Education and Prevention Strategies:**

St. Seachnall’s NS will use the following education and prevention strategies to prevent bullying:

* The Stay Safe Programme
* Social Personal and Health Education classes
* Children of God programme
* Anti-Bullying website (to be set up by the DES in conjunction with this initiative)
* Bully Box in the school library where pupils can report bullying issues confidentially. Bully Box will be checked regularly by the Principal.
* Constant emphasis on the importance of respect
* Raising the issue of bullying and respect at school assemblies early in the year. This will be repeated mid way through the year.
* Focus on intercultural awareness, e.g. pupil explains their religion, culture to the class or at assembly. See also *Toolkit for Diversity*.
* Visits by groups who give presentations on bullying, e.g. Sticks and Stones
* Friends for Life programme, esp in Rang 6.

The school’s programme of support for and working with pupils affected by bullying involves

* discussing the incidents with the pupils,
* reassuring them that they were right to bring the events to the attention of staff, that they were not telling tales and their actions will help others,
* they will be reminded that they should tell again if they have any new concerns.
* The teacher(s) involved and the Principal will check from time to time with the child that everything is ok.

**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.

**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.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 4th June 2014.

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents’ Association (where one exists). A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

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 (or where none exists, be otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents’ Association (where one exists). A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson of Board of Management) Principal

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date of next review: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX A:

**Types of bullying**

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

o **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.

o **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.

o **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”.

o **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, e-mail, 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.

o **Name calling**: Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) which 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.

o **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.

o **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**.**

**St. Seachnall’s NS**

**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**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Pupil concerned |  |
| Other pupil |  |
| Parent |  |
| Teacher |  |
| Other, specify |  |

**4. Location of incidents**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Playground |  |
| Classroom |  |
| Corridor |  |
| Toilets |  |
| Other, specify |  |

**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 |  |
| 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**

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1. **Details of actions taken**

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Signed \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (Relevant Teacher) Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date submitted to Principal \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_