



St Paul's Secondary School

Care - Inclusion - Respect

# ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Ratified: 5 October 2023

To be reviewed: June 2024

## Anti-Bullying Policy and Procedures

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. Paul's Secondary 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.
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.
    - 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, 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.

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.

It should be noted that it is a criminal offence to use a mobile phone / digital device to menace, harass or offend another person. As such, the school may consider it appropriate to involve the Gardaí in such incidents.

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 teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying are the Form Teacher and/or Year Head, reporting to the Deputy Principal and/or Principal**

A bullying concern may be reported to any teacher in the school. Such reports should be brought to the attention of the relevant Form Teacher and/or Year Head who will consult with the Deputy Principal and/or Principal, as appropriate.

The Principal or Deputy Principal may consider it helpful to delegate duties, which would assist in the investigation, to other teacher(s).

**5. *The aim of St Paul's Secondary School is to help students to become well-balanced and mature persons through a programme that caters for the spiritual, moral, intellectual, physical and aesthetic potentialities of the individual. It is central to the ethos of the school that it is inclusive of students of all nationalities, religious and cultural backgrounds. The school strives to provide a structured caring learning environment in which high standards of behaviour are expected and positive relationships can prevail. Parents and pupils have a***

*responsibility in helping the school to prevent and address school-based bullying behaviour and to deal with the negative impact within school of bullying behaviour that occurs elsewhere.*

**The education and prevention strategies that will be used by the school are as follows:**

- A strong pastoral care structure which includes a class tutor system, access to guidance counselling and a prefect system, an important element of which involves two prefects and a senior librarian being linked with each of the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> year class groups. TY 'Buddies' are also linked with 1<sup>st</sup> year classes
- A wide range of curricular and extra-curricular programmes and award systems which provide opportunities for students to grow in self confidence
- Within the classroom and in all subject areas, teachers actively promote a culture of respect. Subjects such as Religious Education (RE), Social Personal Health Education (SPHE), the Relationship and Sexuality (RSE) programme, **Wellbeing Programme** and Civil Social & Political Education (CSPE) are particularly relevant to the prevention of bullying and the promotion of respect for diversity and inclusiveness.
- A whole school understanding of and approach to dealing with the issue of bullying will be facilitated at staff meetings, seminars and awareness raising events.
- The school has an active Student Council which regularly organises anti-bullying awareness initiatives such as '*friendship week*', poster campaigns, talks from outside agencies on topics such as cyber bullying etc.
- The school organises an 'International Day' to celebrate diversity.
- Student surveys currently used as part of on-going school self-evaluation, our DEIS Plan, will be extended to include questions designed to provide information on the effectiveness of anti-bullying measures in place and ideas for improvement.
- The school provides supervised library and computer facilities each day at lunchtime. Some students prefer the quieter environment to the more robust activities also available to them. Board Games are available in the Library.
- A quiet area is also provided at break and lunchtime for vulnerable students and the needs of students are considered in the allocation and placement of lockers.
- Most cyber bullying takes place at home and often at night and while the impact can be felt in school, parents are reminded of their responsibility with regard to supervision of access to technology.

- In consultation with the Parents Association, the school organises from time-to-time talks for parents on bullying and related matters.
  - St Paul's Secondary School anti-bullying policy is adopted in conjunction with the school's Code of Behaviour which clearly states that bullying and harassment are unacceptable. The approach to developing positive behaviour and procedures for addressing serious misbehaviour as outlined in the Code of Behaviour will be fully implemented.
  - Adherence to the school's Mobile Phone/Digital Device Policy together with the Information & Communications Technology (ICT) and Acceptable Use Policy (AUP), will further prevent the occurrence of bullying and in particular, cyber bullying. All of these policies have been drawn up in consultation with all the partners and have been communicated clearly to students and parents. All policy documents are available on the school website and /or from the school.
6. *Given the complexity of the issue, the Board of Management recognises that no one intervention works in all situations. When investigating and dealing with bullying, the primary aim will be to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as practicable, the relationship of all the parties involved, rather than to apportion blame. It should be noted by parents, staff and pupils that it takes time to investigate any incident of bullying. Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and to assist the school in resolving the matter as quickly as possible.*

**Procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:**

All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated by the 'relevant teacher(s)' who will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach. This will involve seeking answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. Pupils may be asked to give written accounts.

If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually in the first instance and then, if necessary, met as a group.

The 'relevant teacher(s)' will use his/her professional judgement in relation to records to be kept of reports, actions taken and any discussions with students involved and their parents. If it is established that bullying has occurred, the 'relevant teacher' will keep appropriate written records. For this purpose, the recording template at Appendix 3 will be used and a copy provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal, as appropriate.

The Principal will, at least once a term, provide a report to the Board of Management setting out the total number of bullying cases reported on this form (Appendix 3) since the previous

Board meeting and confirming that all cases have been or are being dealt with, in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy and the '*Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools*'. The Principal's Report(s) will not include any identifying details of the pupils involved.

Where it has been determined that bullying has occurred, the parents of the parties involved will be contacted and informed of the matter and the action being taken (with reference to the school policy). Parents may of course be contacted at an earlier stage in the investigation. It is important to note that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, it is a private matter between the pupil(s) being disciplined, her parents and the school. There is no entitlement to this information by any other set of pupils or parents.

It is unacceptable for a parent to accost, threaten or place an offensive comment on a social network site about any student who may be involved or allegedly involved in a bullying matter.

In circumstances where bullying behaviour escalates to a level which threatens the safety of a student or any member of the school community, the Principal may in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour, impose an immediate suspension.

In cases where the Principal has serious concerns about managing the behaviour of a student in relation to bullying, the advice of the National Education Psychological Service (NEPS) will be sought.

Serious instances of bullying behaviour and behaviour that is considered by the school to be potentially abusive, will in accordance with 'Children First' and the 'Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools' be referred to the HSE and/or Gardai as appropriate

In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it will be recorded in the template, Appendix 3. In making this determination, the relevant teacher(s) will make a professional judgement based on the following:

- Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased
- Whether the issues between the parties have been resolved as far as in practicable
- Whether relationships have been restored as far as is practicable, and
- Any feedback from the parties involved, their parents, the Principal or Deputy Principal

Where parents are not satisfied that the school has dealt with the matter in accordance with these procedures, they will be informed of the school's complaints procedure. In the event,

that having exhausted the complaints procedures, parents are still not satisfied, they will be advised of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

**7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:**

Counselling will be provided by the Guidance Counsellor(s) within the school or if it is considered more appropriate, the school will make a recommendation for outside counselling. The guidance counsellors will also meet with parents if required.

Students will be encouraged to become actively involved in extra-curricular activities with a view to building self-confidence and widening their circle of friends.

It will be made clear to students that they should bring any concerns they might have to their Form Teacher, Year Head, Deputy Principal or Principal.

Parents are welcome to telephone or make an appointment to meet with the 'relevant teacher(s)' at any time.

Following the occurrence of a bullying incident, the school authorities will monitor the situation discreetly.

All of the above will apply to all of the parties involved i.e. students who have been bullied and those who have engaged in bullying.

**8. Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils**

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place both to 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 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014**

11. 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.
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 (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: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Chairperson Board of Management)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal)

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

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

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on: **1<sup>st</sup> April 2014**

This Policy was most recently revised by the Board of Management on: **5<sup>th</sup> October 2023**



## Appendix 1      Student Mobile Phone and Digital Device\* Policy

This policy aims to ensure that teaching and learning can take place without interruption and that students and staff are protected from potential harassment, bullying or infringement of privacy. It is part of the school's Code of Behaviour and is directly related to the school's Anti-Bullying Policy, the Child Safeguarding Statement, the Acceptable Use Policy and teaching and learning.

The policy extends to all students in St Paul's Secondary school, with the proviso that sixth year students are permitted to use their phones at lunchtime, *in the study centre only*, provided they comply with the policy in all other respects.

To assist the school in implementing this policy, **parents/guardians are asked not to contact students by mobile phone at any time during the school day**. Contact may be made through the office at 01 4505682. Students who need to contact home urgently, should request permission to use the office phone or have a phone call made on their behalf.

- Mobile phones / digital devices must be switched off / on silent and in the student's own school bag during the school day. The only exception to this will be where a teacher asks students to use their phones in class as part of the lesson or where the teacher requests students to store mobile phones / digital devices in a designated area. The mobile phone / digital device will be returned at the end of the school day.
- Students may not use their mobile phone / digital device on the corridor, in the toilet area, at break or lunch times unless given specific permission by a teacher or other member of staff.
- No photographs may be taken or downloaded, or recordings made while in school premises or during school related activities. Using mobile phones/digital devices in such a way without permission is a serious infringement on the rights of others.
- No images, audio, video or comments referring to the school, or including the school crest, may be posted on their personal social media. Incidences where this arises will be dealt with under the Code of Behaviour.
- Incidents where students use mobile phones/digital devices to bully others or to send offensive messages or calls will be investigated under our Anti-Bullying Policy and will also be dealt with under the Code of Behaviour.
- The school accepts no responsibility for replacing lost, stolen or damaged mobile phones/digital devices. The safety and security of these items is wholly a matter for students and their parents/guardians. It is strongly advised that students mark their mobile phones/digital devices with their names and use passwords to ensure that unauthorised phone calls cannot be made on their phones.
- A student who is found using a mobile phone / digital device outside of the stated times or who contravenes this policy in any way, will have their mobile phone / digital device confiscated.
- It is the responsibility of the teacher who confiscates the phone to place it in an envelope with the student's name and class group and give it to the Year Head or Front Office for safe keeping. The confiscation details will be recorded by the Year Head or Secretary and a notification will be sent to

the Parent / Guardian.

- If a student refuses to hand up the phone, this will be dealt with under the School's Code of Behaviour and Learning Code.
- On the third occasion of a student using their mobile phone / digital device without permission, it must be left with the Year Head / Secretary during school hours, for one week.

**\*Mobile Phone / Digital Device:** For the purpose of this policy a mobile phone / digital device includes all mobile phones, airpods, headphones, earbuds, smartwatches and other electronic devices

## Appendix 2      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	
Isolation/Exclusion		Malicious Gossip	
Name Calling		Other (specify)	

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

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

### 8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

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### 9. Details of actions taken

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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.