



Star of the Sea Primary School

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 Star of the Sea Primary 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) A positive school culture and climate which

- is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
- encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
- promotes respectful relationships across the school community;

(b) Effective leadership

(c) A school-wide approach

(d) A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact

(e) Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that-

- build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
- explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying;
- effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;

(f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils

(g) Supports for staff

(h) Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and

(i) On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

3. In accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* bullying is defined as follows:

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* (See Appendix 1 of this policy)

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows

- *All class teachers
- Deputy Principal
- Principal
- **Relevant Teacher is the teacher that witnesses bullying or to whom bullying is reported. The teacher on yard may be the relevant teacher.

*The Deputy Principal should be made aware of the situation by the class teacher from the outset and should be updated regarding progress as necessary.

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

5. Education and prevention strategies

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 (see Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

School-wide approach:

- A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.

- The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Pupils will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.
- Whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develop an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it-prevention and intervention.
- An annual audit of professional development needs with a view to assessing staff requirements through internal staff knowledge/expertise and external sources
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra- curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.
- Involvement of the student voice in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Buddy system, mentoring, Lunchtime Pals and other student support activities that can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parent(s)/guardian(s) are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school on enrolment. The code of behaviour and anti-bullying policies are also available on our website www.staroftheseapw.ie
- The implementation of regular (e.g. per year/per term/per month/per week) whole school awareness measures e.g. the promotion of friendship, and bullying prevention; annual Friendship Week and parent(s)/guardian(s) seminars; regular school assemblies by Principal.
- Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. 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.
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.:
 - Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
 - Hand note up with homework.
 - Feelings or Worry box?
 - Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
 - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Clear protocols to encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied.
- Implementation of the school's Acceptable Use Policy in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored and the pupils' use of mobile phones is strictly prohibited.
- The listing of supports currently being used in the school and the identification of other supports available to the school e.g. Internet safety and cyberbullying workshops, personal safety and cyberbullying by community Garda, web wise presentations, anti-bullying campaign, barnardos anti-bullying and cyber safety workshops.

Implementation of curricula

- The full implementation of the SPHE curriculum and the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.

- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes, e.g. Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme.
- Targeted delivery of lessons on Cyber Bullying and Diversity and Interculturalism at the appropriate class levels.
- The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.
- Additional activities to promote a positive school culture and atmosphere (Appendix 2)
- **Links to other policies**

School policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to bullying, e.g. Code of Behaviour, Child Protection Policy and Risk Assessment, Supervision of pupils, Acceptable Use policy, Attendance, Sporting activities, Data Protection Policy and RSE.

6. Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:

The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame);

The school's procedures must be consistent with the following approach. Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s)) understand this approach from the outset.

Reporting bullying behaviour

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school. The teacher records such communication on Aladdin and informs the DP.
- All reports will be investigated and dealt with by the class teacher/s of the children involved or if appropriate a relevant teacher.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

Investigating and dealing with allegations of bullying behaviour:

- The class teacher investigates the allegation of bullying behaviour with a view to establishing the facts and bringing any such behaviour to an end. In investigating and dealing with allegations of bullying, the (relevant)teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred.
- 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.
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour.

- The school, through the relevant teacher reserves the right to ask any teacher to write an account of what happened as part of an investigation. This does not necessarily imply that a pupil is guilty of misbehaviour.
- 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. A second teacher may attend.
- Where possible incidents should be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
- 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 may face them from the other members of the group after the 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 parent(s)/guardian(s) 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 parent(s)/guardian(s) an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the pupils;
- 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 parent(s)/guardian(s)) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school.
- The investigating teacher must keep up to date reports on Aladdin in line with school use of Aladdin.
- 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. Pupils who report bullying therefore are not getting others 'in trouble' so much as enabling them to get out of trouble into which they may ultimately get if the bullying continued.
- 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. This information is recorded on Aladdin and on the Appendix 3 document (Aladdin) which is subsequently filed and stored by the Principal.

- If the pupil chooses to break his/her 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 in line with the school's Code of Behaviour.
- All documentation regarding bullying incidents and their resolution is retained securely by the relevant teacher during investigation by password protecting the document on Aladdin. A copy of the incident report and action taken is filed in the pupils' profile folder. On completion, the Principal will maintain a hardcopy of all documents which is stored in a locked filed cabinet in the relevant classroom.

Follow up and recording

- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:
 - Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
 - Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
 - Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable;
 - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardian(s) or the school Principal or Deputy Principal
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.
- Where a parent(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
- In the event that a parent(s)/guardian(s) has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Recording of bullying behaviour

It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner.

The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

Informal- pre-determination that bullying has occurred

- All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them on the incident report form- Behaviour on Aladdin. All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher.
- While all reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher must keep a written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same. This is recorded on Aladdin.
- The relevant teacher must inform the Deputy Principal and/or Principal of all incidents being investigated.

- If, following this pre-determination stage, the teacher concludes that no bullying took place the complainants must be informed and reasons given for the conclusion reached. This is recorded on Aladdin.

Formal Stage 1-determination that bullying has occurred

- If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must keep appropriate written records on Aladdin which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

Formal Stage 2-Appendix 3 (From DES Procedures)

The relevant teacher must use the recording template at **Appendix 3** to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

a) in cases where he/she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred; and

b) Where the school has decided as part of its anti-bullying policy that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

When the recording template is used, it is password protected on Aladdin accessible to relevant teacher, Deputy Principal and Principal. They will be retained in line with GDPR Policy

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

Bullied pupils:

- Ending the bullying behaviour,
- Changing the school culture to foster more respect for bullied pupils and all pupils,
- Changing the school culture to foster greater empathy towards and support for bullied pupils,
- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the awareness-raising programme,
- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the speedy identification of those responsible and speedy resolution of bullying situations,
- After resolution, enabling bullied pupils to complete a victim-impact statement,
- Helping bullied pupils raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school).
- If pupils require counselling or further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same, i.e. NEPS, Family Counselling Services

Bullying pupils:

- Making it clear that pupils who bullied who reform are not blamed or punished and get a 'clean sheet,'
- Making it clear that pupils who bully who reform are doing the right and honourable thing and giving them praise for this,

- Making adequate counselling facilities available to help those who need to learn other ways of meeting their needs besides violating the rights of others,
- Helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school),
- Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils' feelings of self-worth,
- In dealing with negative behaviour in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child,
- In dealing with bullying behaviour seeking resolution and offering a fresh start with a 'clean sheet' and no blame in return for keeping a promise to reform.

8. Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils

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

9. Prevention of Harassment

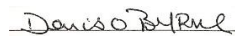
The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of pupils or staff or the harassment of pupils or staff on any of the nine grounds specified i.e.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

10. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 19th Oct 2015

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website www.staroftheseapw.ie, is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request and provided to the Parents' Association. 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 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 of Board of Management)



Principal

Date: October 2015

Date of next review: 2019-2020

Appendix 1

Examples of bullying behaviours:

<p>General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc. • Physical aggression • Damage to property • Name calling • Slagging • The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person • Offensive graffiti • Extortion • Intimidation • Insulting or offensive gestures • The “look” • Invasion of personal space • A combination of any of the types listed.
<p>Cyber</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denigration: Spreading rumors, lies or gossip to hurt a person’s reputation • Harassment: Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual • Impersonation: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person’s name • Flaming: Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight • Trickery: Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online • Outing: Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images • Exclusion: Purposefully excluding someone from an online group • Cyber stalking: Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety • Silent telephone/mobile phone call • Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls • Abusive text messages • Abusive email • Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/ Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles • Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures • Abusive posts on any form of communication technology

Identity Based Behaviours Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).	
Homophobic and Transgender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spreading rumours about a person’s sexual orientation • Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation • Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian...used in a derogatory manner • Physical intimidation or attacks • Threats
Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background • Exclusion on the basis of any of the above
Relational	<p>This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malicious gossip • Isolation & exclusion • Ignoring • Excluding from the group • Taking someone’s friends away • “Bitching” • Spreading rumours • Breaking confidence • Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear • The “look” • Use or terminology such as ‘nerd’ in a derogatory way
Sexual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching • Harassment
Special Educational Needs, Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Name calling • Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs • Taking advantage of some pupils’ vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying • Taking advantage of some pupils’ vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues. • Mimicking a person’s disability • Setting others up for ridicule

Appendix 2.



Activities to Promote a Positive School Culture and Atmosphere:

- Modelling of desired behaviour – respect is key.
- Consistent and fair implementation of the Code of Behaviour
- Curricular – each child is given the opportunity to succeed; differentiation, playing to strengths and interests
- Focus on well-being in classes and on a whole-school basis
- Extra-curricular activities; hurling, football, cross country etc. Jason re hurling for targeted students
- Links with the community – GAA, Historical Society, Soccer Club, Church, Tidy Towns, PACE.
- The ethos of the school is to focus on the positive, catch them being good.
- Assemblies – weekly; celebrate achievements, showcase talents, celebrate milestones,
- Moladh an Phríomhoide - Acknowledge friendly behaviour, manners and respectful behaviour.
- Social Media & Website – showcase our successes, keeping parents informed, highlighting achievements; individuals, groups and whole school.
- Awareness amongst staff; each September staff meeting (and regularly throughout the year) behaviour is discussed and it is ensured that all are aware of procedures.
- All school staff are asked to monitor children and report any concerns to the relevant teacher.
- In class staff initiatives to promote well-being and a positive culture
- Consistency among staff in implementing and reminding the children of the school rules, explicitly teaching the children about acceptable behaviour and following up on any behaviour issues
- Staff relations – social committee organise events.
- Internet Safety – Cyber safety sessions organised for senior classes. Whole school Involvement in Internet Safety Week
- Adequate adult supervision on yard and on wet days. Reviewed regularly.
- Student voice involvement– hoping to resume in term 2 if restrictions allow.
- Pre-Covid – Play-stations on yard with older children acting as play leaders.
- Whole school initiatives to promote a culture of positive behaviour
 - Friendship week
 - Intercultural day – pre-Covid held each year. Children of all cultures and backgrounds welcomed into school to showcase their traditions, food, dress etc.
 - Grandparents day
 - Maths/Literacy/Science for Fun
 - Anti-bullying surveys
 - Assembly awards
 - Anti-bullying parent’s session
 - Random act of kindness week
 - SPHE curriculum – walk tall, stay safe & rse
 - Well being curricula taught
 - School events e.g. 12 days of Christmas
- Strong culture of telling, pupils and parents are always encouraged to communicate issues to teachers. Our strong communication links with parents is very helpful with this, they are never afraid to call, email or talk to staff if problems arise.
- Principal meet and greet in the morning.
- Anti-bullying policy – clear and structured guidelines for teachers, parents and pupils – expectations are clear.
- DFL – discipline for learning – step system – clear boundary setting.
- Buddy benches in yard

- Picnic benches and toys on yard to promote co-operative play.
- Active involvement of parents in school life through the Parents' Association and/or sharing of skills

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		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	Racist	Membership of	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.