School Position on Bullying

The St Joseph's school community believes that each pupil has a right to an education free from fear and intimidation.

The school regards bullying as a serious infringement of individual rights and a serious threat to the self-esteem and self-confidence of targeted pupil(s). Therefore, it does not tolerate bullying of any kind.

Every report of bullying is treated seriously and dealt with, having due regard for the well being of the targeted pupil(s) and the perpetrator(s).

All staff members cultivate an environment free from bullying.

The immediate priority, should a bullying incident occur, is ending the bullying, (*thereby protecting the person(s) being targeted*), resolving the issues and restoring the relationships involved insofar as is practicable.

All staff, pupils and the school community are expected to contribute to the creation and maintenance of a safe environment in the school. On becoming aware of any bullying situation, in or outside the school involving pupils in St. Joseph's they should notify the principal of the school. Bullying behaviour is too serious not to report.

Pupils' participation in school life in general is encouraged through existing school structures. Awareness of bullying, and willingness to take action to prevent or stop it, is part of this participation. Friendship Week, Anti-Bullying Week and the SPHE programme help to raise awareness of friendships and teach strategies to maintain wellbeing and stay safe.

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 Joseph's N.S. 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. "Every child, every chance, every day".
   - 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
   ✓ identity-based bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of ethnic/cultural minorities 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 information inserted at the end of this policy.

4.   The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:
   - The class teacher
   - A teacher who was present during an incident on yard or during small group withdrawal
   - The principal teacher thereafter if necessary

5.   The following education and prevention strategies will be used at the appropriate and relevant level for each class:
   - St Joseph's N.S is a junior school and we pursue active strategies to ensure that children experience a school climate which encourages respect, trust, caring, consideration and support for others.   As pupils model their behaviour on the behaviour of adults, all staff members and volunteers must be careful to act as good role models and not misuse their authority.   Moreover they should be firm, clear and consistent in their disciplinary measures. Techniques based on positive motivation and recognition and reward have been shown to be more effective in promoting desired behaviour than methods which are based on threat and fear.   The positive discipline approach is adapted from the Incredible Years and PAX programmes.
   - Each class is committed to providing opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth and to promote emotional intelligence and resilience. Friendship Week in Term 1 and Anti-Bullying Week in Term 2, classroom displays and buddy sessions focus attention on building positive relationships and affirming good behaviours.   Key messages are displayed in classrooms and throughout the school.
   - Parents will be informed of the school policy on bullying and encouraged to look for signs of bullying. They are also informed how to contact the school if they have information or want to report bullying.
   - There will be supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors and school grounds. 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.
   - We have a number of initiatives to promote emotional well-being, social skills and positive mental health in the school. A music therapist provides support for individuals and small groups of children. Nurture groups are provided by support teachers. The Home School Community Liaison teacher provides a vital link between

parents and school and ensures that there is a team approach to promoting positive behaviour and supporting children .

Curriculum/School Programmes

- A number of programmes taught in the school are particularly relevant to the prevention of bullying, building resilience, emotional well-being and the promotion of respect for diversity and inclusiveness. The SPHE curriculum strands have particular relevance.

- The Stay Safe programme and RSE programme are implemented at all levels on a bi-annual basis and Walk Tall, and other relevant resources are used to enhance children's self-protection skills including their ability to recognize and cope with bullying.

- Zippy's Friends and Fun Friends resources are available for use in the school. Zippy's Friends is a social and emotional learning programme which was developed by Partnership for Children, academics and educational resources specialists. This programme helps children to problem solve and to develop their own positive strategies to deal with problems through activities, stories, discussion, games and role-play. Fun Friends is an evidence based anxiety prevention and resilience building programame developed by Dr. Paula Barrett. This programme helps pupils to develop resilience by teaching them effective strategies to copy with, problem solve and manage all kinds of emotional distress, including worry, stress, change and anxiety.

Links to Other School Policies
Code of Behaviour, Child Protection Policy, Supervision of Pupils, Acceptable Use Policy (ICT), Attendance Policy

6. Procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying.

   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 those involved rather than to apportion blame. *(Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2013)*

   1. All children are encouraged to tell an adult if they feel they are being bullied. Children are taught ways to tell their class teacher, learning support teacher, SNA, parents, family member or another adult through role-play - Stay Safe, Section 4. Children may speak to their teacher or may be encouraged to draw pictures, write a note or communicate in an alternative way.

2. In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher(s) will exercise her/his/their professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred; what type if it has and how best the situation might be resolved

3. All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher(s). In this 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

4. Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers, cleaners must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher

5. 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

6. It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset

7. Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents

8. Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved

9. 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

10. When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher(s) 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

11. If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. It may also be helpful to ask those involved to write down their account or draw pictures of the incident. 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

12. Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher

13. Where the relevant teacher(s) has/have 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

14. In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher(s) 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. 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

15. 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;

16. Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved may 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

17. An additional follow-up meeting with parents of the children involved may take place after an appropriate time to ensure that the matter has been resolved satisfactorily

18. 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

19. 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: Noting and reporting of bullying behaviour is to be documented using the *template for recording bullying behaviour* **(Appendix 3).** All records must be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour will adhere to the following:

(i) While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher(s), the relevant teacher(s) will use her/his/their professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports; the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same

(ii) If it is established by the relevant teacher(s) that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher(s) must keep appropriate written records which will assist her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved

(iii) The relevant teacher(s) must use the recording template at Appendix 3 to record the bullying behaviour.

7.   The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

- In-school supports will be provided for pupils affected by bullying. Activities and programmes designed to raise self-esteem, build emotional resilience and social skills will prioritise those children who are most at risk.
    Music therapy, Parental involvement, Nurture sessions,
    Social skills, Small group friendship games
- Regular check-in with the pupils to make sure all is well using a traffic lights system
- Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

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 an ethnic/cultural minority.

10.   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.

11.   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.

Ratification

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on ___6|2|24___

Next review date: June 2025

Bernie Mann

Bernie Mann, Chairperson, Board of Management   -

Bridget Clear

Bridget Clear, Principal   -

Appendix 2 Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate

- 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.

- Catch them being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.

- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.

- Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.

- 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.

- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of technology.

- 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 must actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.

- Ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.

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))*		4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))*	
Pupil concerned		Playground	
Other Pupil		Classroom	
Parent		Corridor	
Teacher		Toilets	
Other		School Bus	
		Other	

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 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 _____