

Scoil San Carlo Senior National School

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 Scoil San Carlo 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.

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 behavior.

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 nonthreatening environment;
- and promotes respectful relationships across the school community.

Key elements of a positive school culture and climate include (p23 D.E.S. procedures 2013)

1. The school acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment.
2. The school acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual and his/her worth as a human being.
3. The school promotes positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among all its members.
4. The school prohibits vulgar, offensive, sectarian or other aggressive behaviour or language by any of its members.
5. The school has a clear commitment to promoting equity in general and gender equity in particular in all aspects of its functioning.
6. The school has the capacity to change in response to pupils' needs.
7. The school identifies aspects of curriculum through which positive and lasting influences can be exerted towards forming pupils' attitudes and values.
8. The school takes particular care of *at risk pupils* and uses its monitoring systems to facilitate early intervention where necessary and it responds to the needs, fears or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner.
9. The school recognises the need to work in partnership with and keep parents informed on procedures to improve relationships on a school-wide basis.
10. The school recognises the role of parents in equipping the pupil with a range of life-skills.
- ~~11. The school recognises the role of other community agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying.~~

12. The school promotes habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the interdependence of people in groups and communities.
13. The school promotes qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among all its members both in school and out of school.
14. Staff members share a collegiate responsibility, under the direction of the Principal, to act in preventing bullying/aggressive behaviour by any member of the school community.

*** At Risk Pupils*** - Both Irish and international research shows that physical appearance is the most common reason for being bullied, with race, nationality and skin colour as the second most common reason. Children from poorer families, migrants, and those who are gender nonconforming have also been found to be more vulnerable to bullying behaviour (UNESCO, 2019) Source: Cinéaltas Action Plan on Bullying 2022.

Other vulnerable groups include pupils with disabilities or special educational needs, those who have difficulty communicating or who do not understand social cues.* (Source: Anti-bullying Procedures 2013)

A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact

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

'...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*

Some Examples of bullying behaviours (this list is not exhaustive)

- 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.

General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying including Cyberbullying

- 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/Instagram/WhatsApp/X(Twitter)/You Tube or on Games consoles
- Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures
- Abusive posts on any form of communication technology.

Identity-based bullying 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.

- 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
- 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 bullying - This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:

- 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 of terminology such as ‘nerd’ in a derogatory way

Sexual bullying – This includes

- Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching
- Sexual Harassment

Special Educational Needs or Disability based bullying -

- 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

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.

Roles and Responsibilities:

The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows: Principal, Deputy Principal, All class teachers. Any other teacher may act as the relevant teacher if the circumstances warrant it.

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*):

A 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 develops 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
- Professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teacher(s)

- 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 extracurricular 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.
- Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school to be included in student journals and displayed publicly in classrooms and in common areas of the school.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils every term.
- The school Code of Behaviour is available to all parent(s)/guardian(s) through the school web site and a hard copy is available by arrangement. All parent(s) /guardian(s) are required to sign an acknowledgement that they have read and will comply with the Code of Behaviour as part of the Enrolment process.
- The implementation of regular whole school awareness measures e.g. notice board in the school and classrooms on the promotion of friendship, and bullying prevention; annual Friendship Week, parent information meetings student surveys; regular school assemblies.
- 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.
- The pupils will be encouraged to inform the relevant teacher of any concerns they may have using on or more of the strategies listed.
 - Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
 - Hand note up with homework.
 - Make a phone call to the school or to a teacher in the school.
 - Anti-bully or Niggle box (where used by class teacher)
 - 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.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) are encouraged to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied. The first point of contact should be with the class teacher.
- The development of an Acceptable Use Policy in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored, as is the pupils' use of mobile phones.
- The supports currently being used in the school in dealing with children who are engaging in bullying behaviour or the victims of such behaviour are N.E.P.S. and the H.S.E. Family Services, where such intervention is needed.

Implementation of Curricula

- The full implementation of the SPHE curriculum and the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.
- Staff are encouraged to take part in Continuous Professional Development in relation to delivering these programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from Cool School Lessons, Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme.
- School wide delivery of lessons on Cyber Bullying from Web wise Primary teachers' resources and cool school programme and, where possible, from outside organisations who have expertise in the area of Cyber-safety.
- An annual Friendship/Anti-Bullying Week with associated activities.
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programme. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardai, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying
- 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. Learning support teachers will reinforce class lessons on anti-bullying

- The school will implement the advice in “Sexual Orientation advice for schools” (RSE Primary, see booklet).

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 (see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):

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 the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame);

The school’s procedures are consistent with the approach outlined in section 6.8 of the D.E.S. Anti-Bullying Procedures (2013).

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.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;

Investigating and dealing with incidents: Style of approach (see section 6.8.9 D.E.S. Anti-Bullying Procedures)

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the (relevant) teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
- 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.
- Where possible incidents should be 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 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.

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. Each teacher will use a class behaviour book to record incidents. Incidents occurring in the school yard will be recorded in the yard incident book. All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher
- While all reports, including anonymous 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. The relevant teacher must inform the principal of all incidents being investigated.

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 which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved. All records retained by the relevant teacher will be stored securely in the classroom.

Formal Stage 2-Appendix 3 (From DES Procedures)

The relevant teacher must use a recording template 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) In circumstances where the relevant teacher, in consultation with the principal teacher, decide that the incident is sufficiently serious due to the nature of the bullying behaviour or the impact the behaviour is having on others the bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal .

When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher and a copy maintained by the principal. The completed templates will be stored securely by both the relevant teacher and the principal. These records will be available to the principal, deputy principal, relevant teacher and any other member of the teaching staff as required, subject to the approval of the principal. The relevant records, (those relating to their own child(ren)), will also be available to parents/guardians of the child (ren) involved in any recorded incident of bullying behaviour. These records will be maintained until the pupils reach the age of 21 after which they will be destroyed.

Established intervention strategies

Strategies from the list below will be used by the school in addressing incidents of bullying behaviour.

- Teacher interviews with all pupils
- Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process
- Working with parent(s)/guardian(s)s to support school interventions
- No Blame Approach
- Circle Time
- Restorative interviews
- Restorative conferencing
- Implementing sociogram questionnaires

The Procedures mention the following intervention strategies and reference the author Ken Rigby;

- The traditional disciplinary approach
- Strengthening the victim
- Mediation
- Restorative Practice
- The Support Group Method
- The Method of Shared Concern

<https://www.kenrigby.net/11a-Nine-strategies>

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows (see Section 6.8.16 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):

- All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience e.g.
 - Pastoral care system

- Buddy / Peer mentoring system
- Group work such as circle time
- If pupils require counselling or further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies i.e. N.E.P.S. and the H.S.E. to organise same. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.
- Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

Links to other policies

Other school policies, practices and activities which are particularly relevant to the school's Anti- Bullying policy are the Code of Behaviour, Child Protection policy, Supervision of pupils policy, Acceptable Use policy, Attendance policy.

Effective 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.

On-going Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and is available to parents and pupils on request and has been provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of the policy will be made available to the Department and the Patron if requested.

This policy was originally adopted by the Board of Management on 12th May 2014 and its implementation is reviewed annually at the January Board of Management meeting. In line with requirements, written notification that the review has been completed will be issued to the school community, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association.

Last reviewed January 2024

Date of this review: January 2025

Tony BStael Chairperson of the Board

Clare McHugh Principal

Date: 27/1/2025