



# Anti-bullying policy

## St. Vincent de Paul Girls' Primary School, Marino, Dublin 9.

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 Vincent de Paul Girls' 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.

1. 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
    - promotes respectful relationships across the school community
  - b. **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:
      1. build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils
    - 2. explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
  - c. **Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils**
  - d. **Supports for staff**
  - e. **Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies)**
  - f. **Ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.**
2. **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*.

**3. The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying are as follows:**

The supervising teacher

The class teacher

The principal

The deputy principal

**4. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber- bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:**

**Creation of a culture of "telling".**



- Teachers should repeatedly reinforce the message that if anyone is the victim of bullying behaviour, they should not retaliate in any way, but they should tell an adult. Victims should be reassured that if they tell, something will be done about the bullying in a safe manner and all reported incidents will be dealt with.
- SPHE and Stay Safe lessons taught with a focus on "how to tell".
- Anyone witnessing bullying behaviour is encouraged to always tell a teacher. This is not telling tales but a means of protecting victims.

### **Raising the awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour by:**

- Displaying an anti-bullying statement (e.g. "Bullying is wrong and is not tolerated in our school. We are a telling school") in prominent places around the school and going over aspects of bullying at assemblies. (What is bullying? What is not bullying? What to do if you feel you are being bullied? What to do if you see somebody else being bullied?)
- Engaging in formal teaching within the class setting through SPHE and Stay Safe programmes. (school to research resources on identity bullying)
- Celebrating ethnicity. International Days may be held in classes.
- Friendship Week

### **Other strategies**

- Formal programmes of work are a vital element in raising children's self-esteem and equipping children to cope with bullying behaviour e.g. Walk Tall, RSE, Alive-O, Stay safe.
- Positive reinforcement by teachers in classroom setting e.g. Class dojo (online merit system), Students of the week, Golden time, spot prizes, stars, stickers etc.
- Modelling of respectful behaviour and language by teachers and staff.
- Promotion of extra-curricular activities which encourage co-operation among pupils (Drama, Choir, Sports etc.).
- Rewarding incidents of good and improved behaviour and showing Acts of Kindness at class level and whole-school.
- Encouraging students to look out for each other and to be responsible for their own behaviour.
- All teachers are required to be vigilant on yard duty, record incidents and monitor repeat offenders.



- Immediate affirmation of children who report incidents of bullying which they have witnessed.
- Circle-time sessions and role-play in Drama can be used to discuss and explore issues of bullying.
- Each class to have a set of class rules which complement the school's Code of Behaviour.
- Ensure supervision at all times where pupils have access to the internet and, as per our mobile phone policy, ensure that pupils' phones remain switched off on the premises or on school excursions.
- All teachers to do a lesson on internet safety at the start of the year. Outside speakers to address senior classes every second year. Posters and books addressing cyberbullying are displayed.
- To focus on the topic of bullying on at least one school assembly as per the recommendations of 'Dealing with Bullying in Schools' (Office of the Ombudsman for Children 2013).

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

- Children and/or parents are encouraged to disclose immediately, incidents or behaviour that they perceive as bullying, whether directed at them or others. Emphasis should be placed on the difference between tale telling and reporting bullying. All children are made aware that their class teacher is available to listen.
- A person who notices bullying behaviour (or to whom it is reported) will report the incident **to the class teacher** immediately. All incidents will be investigated. Parents are welcome to discreetly inform the teacher of any concerns / issues in this regard.
- The teacher will take a calm, unemotional, problem-solving approach.
- All sides will be listened to separately and notes will be taken.
- Notes will be brief, factual and will be void of emotional, or judgemental language.
- It may also be appropriate to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident.
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour the teacher will seek answers to questions of **what?, where?, when?, who? and why?**
- Incidents of bullying behaviour are best investigated, initially, outside the classroom situation, to avoid the public humiliation of the victim or the pupil engaged in bullying, in an attempt to get both sides of the story. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way.
- The teacher will keep the principal informed of any allegations of bullying, ongoing investigation and all communications relating to an allegation.

**In cases where bullying has been established, these are the steps to be taken:**

- Principal and class teacher to inform and meet the parents of both victim and bully as appropriate.



- If it is concluded that a pupil has engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to her that she is in breach of the Code of Behaviour and Discipline.
- Through discussion, pupils should be made aware of their hurtful behaviour and helped to see the situation from the victim's point of view. They should apologise to the victim and give an undertaking not to engage in such behaviour again. Bullies may be asked to write a reflective piece on the effects of their behaviour.
- Where appropriate, class lessons may be conducted to develop self-esteem and to create a harmonious atmosphere in the classroom (SPHE programme). All children are reminded to show respect for one another.
- Separate follow up meetings with the children involved, with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date, will be arranged if the victim is ready and agreeable.
- Parents will be kept informed of developments.
- In cases of recurring bullying behaviour specific support may be requested from outside agencies e.g. National Educational Psychological Service.
- Parents who come into the school grounds may not approach pupils with regard to perceived problems. All such matters should be referred to the teachers.
- Recording of incidents: All incidents will be logged by the class teacher in a standard form to be kept on file in the office. Incidents which remain unresolved (i.e. where bullying has been established) will be recorded by the class teacher on the recording template as in Appendix 3 (Anti bullying Procedures for Primary and Post -Primary Schools). This template will be completed in full and a copy given to the Deputy Principal and Principal. At least once every school term the Principal will provide a report to the BOM setting out the overall number of bullying cases reported by means of this template and confirmation that all cases are being dealt with in accordance with procedure.
- Incidents of bullying behaviour will result in the imposition of sanctions. Such sanctions will be proportionate to the seriousness of the bullying behaviour. Sanctions and interventions are contained in the school's Code Behaviour.

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

Victims

- \* Victims are reassured from the outset that they are not to blame.
- \* Strategies for restoring self-esteem are explored between teacher and parents/guardians.
- \* Where deemed necessary, the child in consultation with parents may be referred for counselling.
- \* Staged approach - class support, school support (as per Continuum - Behavioural, Emotional and Social difficulties- NEPS).
- \* In cases where the safety of a child outside of school is deemed to be under threat, parents of the pupils concerned may be advised to contact the local Gardai.
- \* Clinical referral and assessment may be necessary.
- \* Strategies for restoring self-esteem are explored between teacher and parents/guardians.
- The school will remind parents of the dangers of 'cyberbullying' and problems which may arise through the use of social networking sites and mobile phones. An outside speaker will be invited to address parents on this topic every second year.
- The school will remind parents that they have a legal obligation to monitor use of various apps and social media.



- The school will remind parents and children that the use of phones and other communication devices is not permitted during the school day.  
**The school cannot be responsible for disagreements between pupils or parents that happen outside the school. However, the school will make reasonable efforts to co-operate with parents in assisting them to deal with such issues which may impact on children in school.**

### **7. 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.

### **8. 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.

#### **Practical indicators of the success of the policy will be:**

- Positive feedback from teachers, parents, pupils.
- Observation of behaviour in classrooms, yard, corridors.

#### **Roles and Responsibility**

- The staff will coordinate and monitor the implementation of this policy.
- The class teacher has particular responsibilities as outlined above.
- The Principal will be involved in the implementation of this policy.
- Pupils and parents will co-operate with the policy.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2021



This policy has been made available to school personnel and published on the school website. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel and published on the school website. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed *Maureen* (Chairperson) Date *22/02/2021*  
Signed *Pat McBlaney* (Principal) Date *22/02/2021*