

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. Patrick’s National School Calry 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;
- ❖ 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
- ❖ 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, 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*.

Ethos

We wish to make it very clear that as a school we regard bullying as an unacceptable form of behaviour and we will attempt at all times to prevent bullying taking place. Our main aim is to prevent bullying but if it does occur it will be investigated by the relevant teacher. The relevant teacher should consult with

the principal/deputy principal at an early stage. The primary aim for the relevant teacher 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). However in the case of serious or continual bullying the school reserves the right to apply any or all of the sanctions available to it under the School Code of Behaviour

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

The relevant teacher with responsibility for initially investigating and dealing with bullying will normally be the class teacher. However other teachers may also have a role to play in the investigation e.g. the teacher on yard duty at the time of an alleged incident /a learning support/resource teacher if an allegation is made by a pupil to them or if they have some relevant information/a teacher who may have had the class previously. However the initial responsibility for investigation and the initial attempts to resolve the issue rests with the class teacher.

5. 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

- ❖ Formal teaching of the relevant section of the SPHE programme that deal with this issue e.g. Stray Safe/Walk Tall, on an annual basis.
- ❖ Formal teaching of the Alive O religion programme large parts of which offers awareness raising opportunities that support diversity, and promote the building of empathy, respect and resilience in pupils
- ❖ Use of additional programmes e.g. Zippy Friends, Friends for Life, Help Stop Bullying Programme, if required in individual classes
- ❖ Additional informal teaching opportunities will be taken in other curricular areas as they arise. These will focus particularly on awareness raising opportunities that support diversity, and promote the building of empathy, respect and resilience in pupils
- ❖ Use of curricular and extra-curricular activities to provide pupils with opportunities to enhance self esteem and build self worth. E.g. sport, art, drama, quizzes, competitions, assemblies etc will be used to provide opportunities in this regard.
- ❖ An acceptable use policy in relation to ICT is in place in the school and parents are requested to sign same on enrolment. On an annual basis class teachers will remind pupils of the content of this policy and use this opportunity to discuss the wider area of same internet use and cyber-bullying both in and out of school.
- ❖ Supervision of pupils' internet access
- ❖ Supervision of pupils during break times and use of a number of "Croke Park" hours to supervise pupils from 9.00am to official opening time at 9.15am. Parents are requested not to leave their children at the school before 9.00am and to collect them promptly at 3.00 pm.
- ❖ Use opportunities in conjunction with the Parents' Association to inform parents of anti-bullying programmes and awareness raising opportunities available to parents in the locality.
- ❖ Use practical steps to build a positive school culture and climate that enhance respect for diversity and help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour- For Example
 - All adults should model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.
 - Teachers should explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
 - Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.
 - Catch them being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
 - 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.

- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routine e.g. star chart/golden time etc
- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.
- Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use. Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.
- Actively involve parents and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media.
- 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 can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- Ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.
- Investigation of allegations or indications of bullying behaviour

6. 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 for the relevant teacher 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);

- (ii) In investigating and dealing with bullying, the relevant teacher in consultation with the principal/deputy principal will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
- (iii) All reports of bullying must be initially investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. 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; If there is a reasonable suspicion that bullying may have occurred the relevant teacher should consult with the principal/deputy principal.
- (iv) Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher and/or principal/deputy principal.;
- (v) 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;
- (vi) It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset;
- (vii) Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents;
- (viii) Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
- (ix) 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;
- (x) When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the 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;
- (xi) 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;
- (xii) Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher;
- (xiii) It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s);
- (xiv) In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher and/or principal/deputy principal 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 (by reference to the school policy). 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;

(xv) Where the relevant teacher and/or principal/deputy principal 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;

(xvi) 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;

(xvii) 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. This can have a therapeutic effect.

In cases where the relevant teacher and/or principal/deputy principal considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded by the relevant teacher(s) in the school recording template attached

(xix) In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher and/or principal/deputy principal 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; and
- ❖ Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal;

(xx) 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;

(xxi) 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.

Procedures for recording bullying behaviour

- 1) While all reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher will use his/her professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same;
- 2) Where specific allegations of bullying have been made, it is recommended that teachers use the school "Allegations of bullying recording sheet" – Appendix A
- 3) If it is established by the relevant teacher and/or principal/deputy principal that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher and/or principal/deputy principal 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.
- 4) The relevant teacher and/or principal/deputy principal must use the school recording template – Appendix B- to record 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;
 - b) in cases where the relevant teacher and/or principal/deputy principal believes the case may escalate beyond that which can be described as bullying to serious physical or sexual assault or harassment

The recording template B at must be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable. It should also be noted that the timeline for recording bullying behaviour in the recording template does not in any way preclude the relevant teacher from consulting the Principal or Deputy Principal at an earlier stage in relation to a case. In this regard teachers should consult the principal/deputy principal at an early stage if they believe their initial attempts to resolve the issue have not been successful.

Bullying as part of a continuum of behaviour

It is also important to note that bullying behaviour can be part of a continuum of behaviour rather than a stand-alone issue and in some cases behaviour may escalate beyond that which can be described as bullying to serious physical or sexual assault or harassment. To ensure that any such cases are dealt with

appropriately, the school reserves the right to apply any or all of the sanctions available to it under the School Code of Behaviour. In cases where a school has serious concerns in relation to managing the behaviour of a pupil, the advice of the National Education Psychological Service (NEPS) should be sought.

Referral of serious cases to the HSE

In relation to bullying in schools, *Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011* (Children First) and the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* provide that in situations where “the incident is serious and where the behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive, the school must consult the HSE Children and Family Social Services with a view to drawing up an appropriate response, such as a management plan”.

Serious instances of bullying behaviour should, in accordance with the Children First and *the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*, be referred to the HSE Children and Family Services and/or Gardaí as appropriate.

The *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* also provide that where school personnel have concerns about a child but are not sure whether to report the matter to the HSE, the Designated Liaison Person must seek advice from the HSE Children and Family Social Services.

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

A number of programmes are available to the school to work with pupils affected by Bullying. Elements of these programmes are designed to assist pupils affect by bullying, pupils who have witnessed bullying behaviour or pupils who have engaged in bullying behaviour. These programmes offer participants opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed. As previously stated the Stay Safe programme is taught in each class in the school every year and elements of this programme are suitable for working with pupils affected by bullying. Teachers also have access to the “Friends for Life” programme and this programme will be used by individual teachers should the need arise. A third programme available to teachers is “The Help Stop Bullying Programme” published by the daughters of Charity Child and Family Service. And this can be used by the teachers if required. As well as these the school has applied to the HSE for inclusion in the “Zippy Friends” training programme. The teachers have agreed to attend this training and when completed a copy of the programme will be provided to the school by the HSE. Unfortunately the HSE has informed us that the trainer for this programme is currently on leave and has not been replaced due to the moratorium on public sector recruitment. They expect the trainer to return to work in the spring of 2014 and have included the school on a waiting list for training. We hope that this will happen before the end of the current school year. The “Zippy Friends” programme is also suitable for working with pupils affected by bullying and will be used by the teachers if required.

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 _____ [date].

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school 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 and provided to the Parents' Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: _____ Signed: _____

(Chairperson of Board of Management) (Principal)

Date: _____ Date: _____

Date of next review: _____