

St. Peter Apostle Junior National School



Anti-Bullying Policy

Policy Summary Details

Policy Title:	Anti-Bullying Policy
Written/Reviewed:	December 2023
Date Ratified by BOM:	6 th of December 2023



1 Introduction

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. Peter Apostle Junior National 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 Key principles for best practice in tackling bullying behaviour

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 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. What constitutes as bullying behaviour? – A definition

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.

4 The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying.

The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying cases are as follows:

- The teachers of the children involved/affected by the bullying
- Principal/ Acting principal
- Deputy/Acting Deputy
- AP with responsibility for behaviour
- Class teacher of the child

5. Education and prevention strategies

5.1 Preventative strategies through a School wide approach

5.1.1 Positive school climate

- Cultivation of an open school culture that is complimented by positive attitudes
- Promotion of the value of diversity
- Displaying positive messages around the school
- Weekly assembly with a focus on positive behaviour explicit teaching and reinforcing of school rules focus on 'We look after each other' and 'We are Safe'. Focus on positive behaviour through use of the 'star of the week'
- School wide behavioural initiative 20 sticker chart with prizes

5.1.2 Empowering children

- Open discussions about what bullying is and the importance of telling
- Make children aware of the role that bystanders can play in adding to or helping a bullying experiences
- Cultivate a culture of openness and transparency
- Encourage children to express concerns and to act upon them

5.1.3 Vigilant supervision

- Adequate supervision of both yards and adjoining areas
- Staggered break times and segregated yards (owing to Covid-19 mitigation measures) are having a positive impact on children's experiences on the yard
- Identification of "hot spots" and "hot times" for potential bullying behaviour
- Supervision of classrooms and corridors during wet days
- Adequate wet day/morning supervision in the hall and adjoining corridors



- Student council who can speak as to their observations on the yard (halted due to mixing of bubbles covid-19 mitigation measure)
- Encourage non-teaching staff to be vigilant in their informal observations

5.1.4 Children with Special Educational Needs

Mindful that children who have special educational needs are vulnerable to bullying behaviours, we seek of safeguard them in a number of ways

- We cultivate a culture where respect diversity is promoted
- Strive for an inclusive learning environment for all through integration and reverse integration.
- Focus on developing the social skills of children who may need support in this area
- Nurturing a culture that is centred on respect for all and helping one another

5.1.5 Parents/guardians and outside agencies

The promotion of relevant home/school/community links – who can monitor/report if bullying behaviour is observed on journeys to and from school. Thus, as far as possible we encourage members of the wider community (such as bus drivers, traffic wardens, staff on the senior school) to play a positive role in assisting us to counter bullying behaviour.

5.1.6 Shared understanding of bullying behaviour and its possible ramifications

We recognise the importance of ensuring that the whole school community have a shared understanding of what constitutes as bullying behaviour

- Staff have access to this policy and as such have a shared understanding of what is meant by bullying behaviour and what does not constitute as bullying behaviour (see section 3, definition of bullying behaviour)
- Staff are reminded about our shared understanding of bullying behaviour at staff meetings and Croke Park hours that are focussed on behaviour
- All staff, both teaching and non-teaching are fully briefed on anti-bullying procedures and are requested to act accordingly
- Continuous professional development for staff members on bullying and anti-bullying measures is encouraged
- When possible, we may seek the assistance from formal agencies such as NEPS, HSE social workers to discuss the phenomenon that is bullying behaviour
- Annual audit of professional development needs

5.2 Preventative strategies through education and curriculum areas

Through curriculum initiative we seek to develop children's self-esteem and to provide them with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth. We also seek to equip our children with protective language and assertive behaviours. Additionally, we seek to develop empathy, respect and resilience in our pupils. We seek to fulfil these aims through the curricular and education programmes. These are detailed in this section.

5.2.1 Social Personal and Health Education

Focus on developing self-esteem, positive self-worth as well as assertive and protective, assertive behaviour through the delivery of the following programmes:

Stay Safe



- Walk Tall
- Relationships and sexuality education
- Incredible years Small Group Programme/Classroom/Parents/Early years
- Dina school
- Fun Friends
- Mindfulness Activities
- Whole school rules

5.2.2 Art, Drama, Religion, Physical Education

- Empower children through drama/art to express concerns they may have around bullying
- Equip children with skills through the medium of drama (and in a safe setting) that will empower them to handle a possible bullying situation.
- Afford children the opportunity to express through the medium of art how they feel about bullying behaviour and the possible effects it can have on others
- Promotion of co-operation through games and teams

5.2.3 Cyber-Bullying

- Active firewall that blocks social media sites
- Explicit lessons on safety and appropriate online behaviour
- Develop a culture of reporting any concerns about cyber-bullying
- Implementation of our AUP policy
- Making parents aware of Internet Safety websites such as Webwise and Zeeko
- Send parents links where they can learn about Internet safety
- Internet safety week to highlight bullying on the internet

5.2.4 Identity-based bullying (including homophobic and transphobic bullying)

- Modelling of respectful behaviours to all individuals
- Teaching children about different family compositions including LGBTQ families through story and discussion INTO publication 'Different Families, Same Love'
- Teaching children that everyone has the right to be who they would like to be
- Teaching about the right to preserve, protect and safeguard people's feelings
- Encouraging and cultivating the empathetic capacities of children
- The above values are implicitly taught through the nurturing of the ethos of the school

5.3 Preventative strategies through complementary policies

5.3.1 School policies that are premised on providing care and support

The school has a range of policies that have a very particular care focus. The underpinning premise of these policies complement that of our anti-bullying policy. These policies are as follows:

- Child Protection Policy
- Code of Behaviour
- Care Team Policy
- SEN Policy
- SPHE Policy



- Inclusion Policy
- HSCL Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Covid Policy
- AUP policy

6. Procedures for dealing with a case of bullying

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).

In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;

All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be 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; 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

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.

6.1 Step 1- Ascertaining if the behaviour is bullying behaviour

The first step in the process allows the relevant teacher(s) to gather information about the incident in calm, unemotional problem-solving manner. This will involve:

- Conducting individual (private) interviews in a sensitive manner with the pupil(s) concerned.
- If a group is involved, all subsequent meetings will be held as a group ensuring that there is transparency in that all the group will hear one another's accounts
- Interviews may also be conducted with pupils who are not directly involved in the incident as they may also have useful information to share.
- All interviews will centre on who, where, what, when and why questions.
- Pupils may also find it helpful to write their account of the incident
- Using the template entitled "Step 1- Informal investigation" A record detailing the actions that were taken during this informal stage should be kept (See Appendix 1) and stored in the relevant teacher's personal filing cabinet.

6.2 Step 2- Actions to be taken if the behaviour is deemed bullying behaviour

In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that a bullying case has been occurred the following actions will be taken.



- Using the template entitled: "Step 2- Bullying behaviour has been confirmed by the relevant teacher" (Appendix 2), all teachers should keep a record of the incident which should include evidence if available (e.g. messages/drawings/writing).
- This document should be kept in the relevant teacher's secure filing cabinet
- "A notification to senior management that a case of bullying behaviour has been confirmed" (Appendix 3) should be sent to the principal, who will keep the formal notification on file in the secure filing cabinet in the office.
- The principal may hold a meeting with the Care Team to discuss the matter.
- Support will be offered to the teacher(s) involved.
- Parents of the pupils involved are informed by a phone call, that there has been an incident and the steps that are being taken to resolve the problem within the class. Opportunities will be provided to discuss with the parents how they reinforce actions being taken by the school at home.
- A record should be kept of any strategies used to resolve the problem (Appendix 2).
- It will be made clear to the pupil who is deemed to be engaging in the bullying behaviour that that he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy.
- Efforts will be made to engage the empathetic capacities of the pupil who engaged in the bullying behaviour (get him/her to see it from the perspective of the child being bullied).
- Disciplinary matters will be dealt with as a private matter between the pupil's being disciplined, his/her parents and the school. All parties will be made aware of this practice.
- A review of the case should take place- this review should be recorded (see Appendix 2). With a view to having a therapeutic effect, follow-up meetings with the relevant parties will be arranged (if the pupil who was bullied is ready and agreeable).
- The principal should be informed of all progress and will support the teacher where necessary.

6.3 Referral of serious cases to the HSE/Tusla

- Where the behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive, the school will consult with the HSE Children and Family Social Services/Tusla with a view to drawing up an appropriate response, such as a management plan.
- Advice may be sought from Tusla in cases where teachers are unsure whether to make a referral.
- Serious instances of bullying behaviour will be referred to Tusla

6.4 Step 3: If the relevant teacher considers that bullying behaviour has been inadequately addressed

In cases where the relevant teacher 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. He/she should fill in the template entitled: "Notification to the principal that the bullying behaviour is continuing beyond 20 days of first being confirmed" (Appendix 4) and submit to the principal.

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; and
- Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal.

6.5 Procedures should parents be dissatisfied with the process

- 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.
- 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.

6.6 Recording

All reports of bullying should be investigated. All actions taken at step 1 should be recorded on the Template entitled: "Step 1- Informal investigation" (Appendix 1)

- If it is established by the relevant teacher(s) that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher(s) must:
 - Submit "a notification to senior management that a case of bullying behaviour has been confirmed" (Appendix 3) to the Principal
 - Using the template entitled "Step 2- Bullying behaviour has been confirmed by the relevant teacher," 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 (Appendix 2)
- If the relevant teacher 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, he/she must fill the template entitled "Notification to the principal that the bullying behaviour is continuing beyond 20 days of first being confirmed" (Appendix 4) and submit to the principal.

7. Programmes of support for working with pupils affected by bullying

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.

- Nurture Group
- Dina School
- Circle Time
- SPHE Programmes e.g. Walk Tall, Be Safe
- NEPS Friends For Life
- Incredible Years (Classroom, small group/parents/Early Years)
- Play, Art, Drama therapies
- Lego therapy
- Avail of services provided by NEPS/Educational Psychologist



• If pupils require counselling or further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.

Pupils will be taught about the importance of telling – there will be a focus on the role that bystanders can play. It will be impressed upon children that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a relevant 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 the Traveller community.

10. Date that the policy was adopted by the Board of Management

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 6/12/23.

11. Policy accessibility and availability

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.

12. Review procedures

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.

	Date:	
Vivion Powney		
(Chairperson)		
	Date:	
Kathy Gleeson		
(Acting Principal)		



Appendix 1

Step 1 – Informal investigation

1. How did you become aware of the behavioural issue? (Please tick as	2. Names of the pupils involved:		
appropriate)	Name(s) of the pupil(s) allegedly being bullied:		
Pupil(s) concerned	N () () () () () () () () () (
Other pupil(s)	Name(s) of the pupil(s) allegedly engaging in bullying behaviour:		
Parent			
Teacher	Details provided by the reporter:		
SNA			
Anonymous			
Other (please specify)			
_	e individual interviews of those involved using		
the "what, where, when, how" format			
4. Details of any other evidence that was used	d		
5. In your professional opinion, do you believ	ve the behaviour to be bullying behaviour		
Yes	No		
If no:Please keep a record of this investigation in a secure place (Aladdin File)			
If yes:			
	e of bullying behaviour has been confirmed form"		
<u>-</u>	ing the form for "Step 2 – Bullying behaviour has,		
Signed:			
Date:			



Appendix 2

Step 2 – Bullying behaviour has been confirmed by the relevant teacher

1. Details of the pupils involved			
Pupil(s) being bullied	Pupils engaged in bullying behaviour		
2. Brief description of the concern			
Source of bullying concern/report	Location of incidents (tick		
(tick relevant box(es))*	relevant box(es))*		
Pupil concerned	Playground		
Other pupil	Classroom		
Parent	Corridor		
Teacher	School Bus		
SNA	Toilets		
Other	Other		
Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern			
Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box) Physical Aggression Cyb	per-bullying		
	midation		
Isolation/Exclusion Mal	icious Gossip		
Name Calling Oth	er (specify)		
3. Provide details of any evidence used to con	firm that bullying behaviour has occured		
3. Please outline details of the meetings that were held with parents			
of rease value actums of the meetings that were near with parents			



4. Brief description of the strategies used to address the matter		
5. Review – Please detail when you reviewed the case and your assessment of the progress		
that has been made		
Signed:		
Date		



Appendix 3

Notification to senior management that a case of bullying behaviour has been confirmed

Please submit to Principal

1. Details of the pupils involved	1. Details of the pupils involved			
Pupil being bullied	Pupils engaged in bullying behaviour			
2. Brief description of the concern				
Source of bullying concern/report	Location of incidents (tick			
(tick relevant box(es))*	relevant box(es))*			
D 11				
Pupil concerned Other pupil	Playground Classroom			
Other pupil Parent	Crissroom			
Teacher	School Bus			
SNA	Toilets			
Other	Other			
Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern				
Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevan				
Physical Aggression Demogra to Property	Cyber-bullying Intimidation			
Damage to Property Isolation/Exclusion				
	Malicious Gossip			
Name Calling	Other (specify)			
Please detail any additional information/evidence that should be noted				
Signed:				
Date:				



Appendix 4

Notification to the principal that the bullying behaviour is continuing beyond 20 days of first being confirmed

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group				
Name			Class	
2. Name(s) and	2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour			
3. Source of bull	ying concern/repor	t	4. Location of incid	ents (tick
(tick relevant box	x(es))*		relevant box(es))*	
Pupil concerned	1	٦	Playground	
Other pupil		┪	Classroom	
Parent		<u> </u>	Corridor	
Teacher			School Bus	
SNA			Toilets	
Other			Other	
5. Name of perso	on(s) who reported	I the bullvin	g concern	
l l l l l l l l l l l l l l l l l l l	on(s) who reported	z cire o diriyiri	5 concern	
L				
6. Type of Bully	ing Behaviour (tick	relevant box	x(es)) *	
Physical Aggres	ssion	Cybe	er-bullying	
Damage to Prop	perty	Intimidation		
Isolation/Exclus	sion	Malicious Gossip		
Name Calling Other (specify)				
7 If doom od !] -	ntitu hagad b11:-	na indiaat-	the velove-t	
7. II deemed ide	ntity-based bunyn	ig, indicate	the relevant categor	y:
Homophobic	SEN related	Racist	Minority group	Other (specify)



8. Brief Description of bullying beh	aviour and its impact
9. Details of actions taken	
Signed	(Relevant Teacher)
Date	_
Date submitted to Principal	



Appendix 5

Checklist for the BOM's annual review of the anti-bullying policy

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual review of the school's antibullying policy and its implementation. The following checklist must be used for this purpose. The checklist is an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. In order to complete the checklist, an examination and review involving both quantitative and qualitative analysis, as appropriate across the various elements of the implementation of the school's anti-bullying policy will be required.

Yes /No

Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools</i> ?	
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	
Is the Board satisfied that school staff are sufficiently familiar with the policy and procedures to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy and procedures in their day to day work?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	
Has the Board discussed how well the school is handling all reports of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and not therefore included in the Principal's periodic report to the Board?	
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	



Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?		
Has the data available from cases reported to the Principal (by the bullying recording template) been analysed to identify any issues, trends or patterns in bullying behaviour?		
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?		
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?		
Date: Vivion Powney (Chairperson)		
Date:		

(Principal)



Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the anti-bullying policy

To: The School Patron

The Board of Management of St. Peter Apostle Junior National School (19569O) wishes to inform you that:

- The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of 14/12/22.
- This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in <u>Appendix 4</u> of the Department's *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

	Date:	
Vivion Powney		
(Chairperson)		
<u>-</u>		
	Date:	
	Date.	
(Principal)		



Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the anti-bullying policy

To: The School Community

The Board of Management of St. Peter Apostle Junior National School (19569O) wishes to inform you that:

- The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of 14/12/22.
- This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in **Appendix 4** of the Department's *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

	Date:	
Vivion Powney		
(Chairperson)		
	Date:	
	<u> Ducc.</u>	
(Principal)		