St. Mary's Parish Primary School

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Anti-Bullying Policy

1. Rationale

This policy serves to outline the procedures followed in St. Mary's to address incidents of bullying. As a school we believe that our pupils have the right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment. 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. Mary's Parish 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.

2. Key Principles:

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).
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.
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3. Definition of Bullying

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. Education and Prevention Strategies

The school will utilise a range of education and prevention strategies to encourage good behaviour and discourage bullying. We will use the materials from www.antibullyingcampaign.ie to raise awareness and to deal with bullying behaviour when it arises. We will seek to develop a positive school culture in the following ways:

- 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.
- Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school and 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 routines.
- 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/ guardians 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 will actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- As self-esteem is a major factor in determining behaviour, we will, through both our curricular and extra-curricular programmes, provide pupils with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth.
- We will raise pupils' awareness and understanding of bullying, including its causes and effects, taking particular account of the needs of pupils with disabilities or with SEN. Approaches to decreasing the likelihood of bullying for pupils with SEN will include improving inclusion, focusing on developing social

skills, paying attention to key moments such as transitioning from primary to post-primary and cultivating a good school culture which has respect for all and helping one another as central.

- We will use the elements of the SPHE curriculum which make specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the inter-related areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships. The Stay Safe programme is a personal safety skills programme which seeks to enhance children's self-protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying.
- An anti-bullying awareness week will be organised in the first term of the year to raise awareness of issues involved with bullying e.g. racial issues, cyber bullying etc.
- We will use all subjects to foster an attitude of respect for all: to promote the value of diversity; to address prejudice and stereotyping and to highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour. In English, there is a wide range of literature available which could be used to stimulate discussion.e.g.in Geography and History references to colonisation, exploitation and dictatorships could be used to illustrate the negative aspect of power. The work will be extended into many other areas such as Art, Drama, Religious Education, and Physical Education.
- Good supervisory and monitoring measures will be put in place both to prevent and deal with bullying behaviour.
- The Board of Management will ensure that temporary and substitute staff has sufficient awareness of the school's code of behaviour and its anti-bullying policy.
- Consistent investigation, follow up and recording of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies)

Individual class teachers will use some of the following systems:

- Praising appropriate behaviour "catch them being good"
- proximal praise
- star charts
- 'traffic lights'
- table points system
- golden time
- competition charts
- Class Dojo
- student of the week
- group reward system
- lucky dip/raffle,
- individual behaviour profiles

On a whole school level there will be periodic awards for good behaviour or effort in the class. These will be awarded in group assemblies and presented by the Principal/Deputy Principal.
Teachers and students will identify bullying 'hot-spots' and 'hot-times' and appropriate steps will be taken to ensure there is adequate supervision at these times.

5. Procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying

The class teacher will have primary responsibility for investigating alleged cases of bullying. However, dependent on the seriousness of the actions involved, the class teacher may decide to involve the Deputy Principal / Principal in accordance with our Code of Behaviour.

Where an alleged incident of bullying involves students from a number of classes, the class teacher will liaise with the Deputy Principal to carry out the investigation. The primary aim will be to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame).

1. All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the class teacher. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. It will 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 are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the class teacher. Where there has been a report of an incident during break time involving students in <u>one</u> class the class teacher will investigate. However, this does not have to be done directly after break. It may be more appropriate to get the class settled and working and then investigate the issue. If a number of classes are involved the teacher can liaise with the Deputy Principal to help in any investigation.

2. 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.

3. Parents and pupils are required to cooperate 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.

4. When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the teacher will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This will be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.

5. Incidents will generally be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.

6. If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved will be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member will be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements.

7. Each member of a group will be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher.

8. Where appropriate, those involved will be asked to write down their account of the incident(s).

9. **In cases where it has been determined by the class teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the school will utilise the approach outlined in www.anti bullying campaign.ie. Depending on the circumstances this means that the parents of the child who was engaging in the bullying activity may not be contacted in the first instance provided the bullying behaviour ceases. (If the child engaged in bullying behaviour has been in serious breach of the school code of behaviour e.g. physical assault, then parents will be contacted.) However parents of the victim will always be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken . The school will give parents an opportunity to discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils.**

10. In cases where it has been determined by the class teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the Deputy Principal will be informed of the details of the investigation.

11. It will be made clear to a pupil engaged in bullying behaviour that he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts will be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.

12. It will 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.

13. If appropriate, follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved will 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.

14. 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 will be recorded by the relevant teacher in the recording template.

15. 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:

    a. Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
    b. Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
    c. Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable; and
    d. Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal;

16. Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents will be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures. (see Appendix 1). If having exhausted these procedures the parent is still not satisfied, the school will advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

6. Procedures for recording bullying behaviour

All records must be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour is as follows:

(i) The class teacher will use his/her professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of all reports of bullying, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding the same. If it is established by the class teacher that bullying has occurred, he/she will 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.

(ii) The template form (see Appendix 2) will serve as a summary of the investigation. Where appropriate, additional notes and details will be attached to the form to retain on file, particularly in cases where the

bullying was not resolved within 20 days of the initial investigation. It should also be noted that the timeline for recording bullying behaviour in this 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.

(iii) In cases where the teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behavior occurred, the relevant teacher will pass a copy of the recording template to the Deputy Principal.

7. Code of Behaviour / Referral to Outside Agencies

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. Accordingly instances of bullying will be dealt with in tandem with the school's overall 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) will be sought.
Serious instances of bullying behaviour will, 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.

Where school personnel have concerns about a child but are not sure whether to report the matter to the HSE, the Designated Liaison Person will seek advice from the HSE Children and Family Social Services/ Tusla.
(cf .'Children First' National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011
(cf. Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, DES)

8. Support for pupils:

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying (both victims and those involved in bullying behaviour) is as follows:

- Provide opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience (as per SPHE programme).
- Encourage friendship and small-group team-building exercises focused on affected students.
- Close monitoring of pupils (those bullying and those being bullied) on yard in the weeks following an incident of bullying.
- Workshops to be made available throughout the year in particular to senior classes.
- Follow up meetings with students on an ongoing basis following any incident of bullying
- Counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.
- Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour will be encouraged to discuss them with teachers.

9. 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.

10. 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.

11. Ratification and Implementation

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 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: 7th June, 2022

Date of next review: May 2023

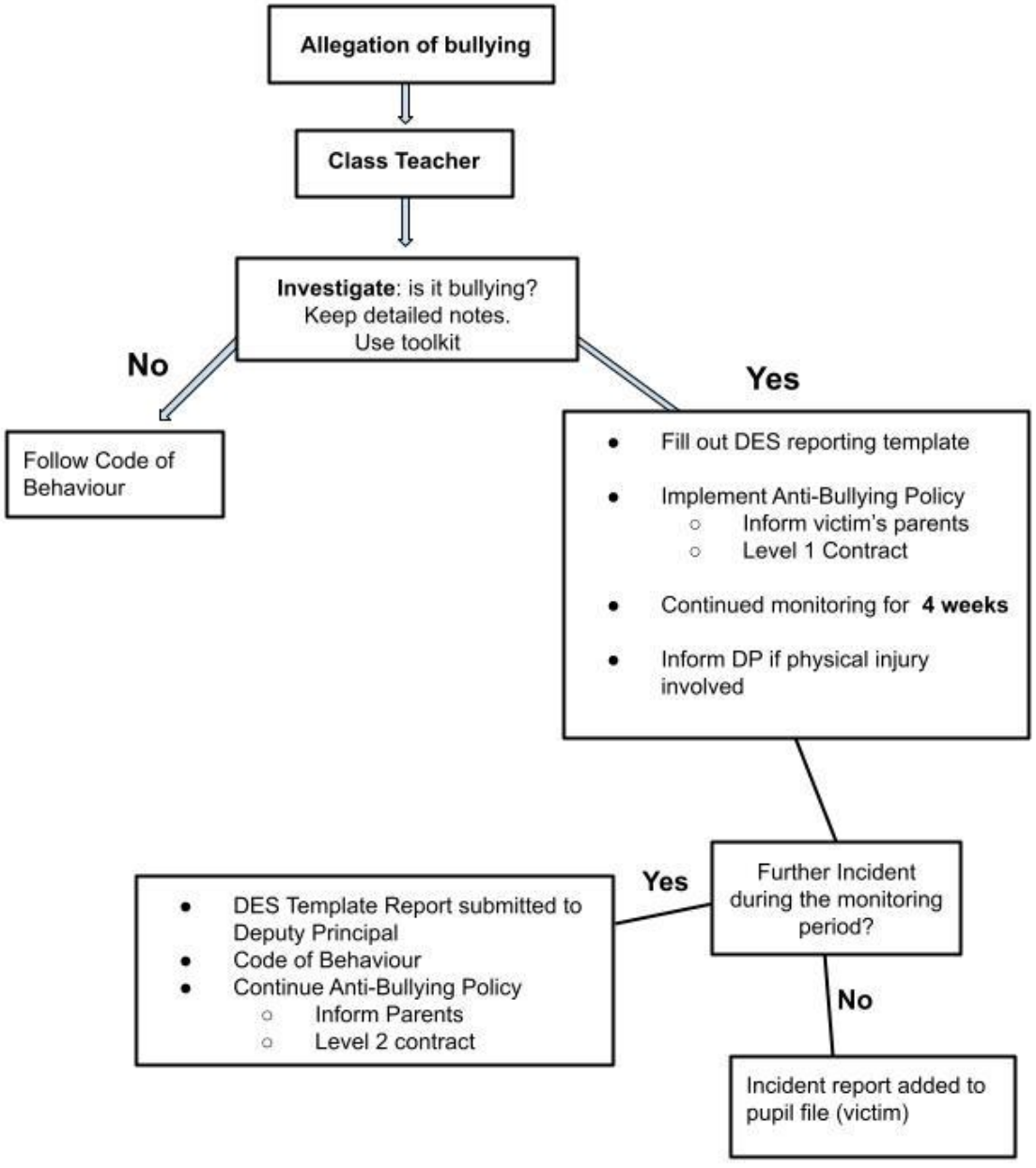
Appendix 1 - Anti-Bullying Procedures / Flowchart

SMPPS - Anti-Bullying Procedures

Key Actions:

- Familiarity with policy: clear understanding of definition of bullying
- Display key respect messages in classrooms / around school
- Explicitly teach pupils appropriate use of social media.
- All staff alert for and report any incidents of alleged bullying behaviour
- Friendship / Anti-bullying week held in Term 1
- Consistent investigation and follow-up of alleged bullying behaviour
- Use of tools from anti-bullying toolkit
- Constant review

Procedure Flowchart



Appendix 2 - 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))*

Pupil concerned	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))*

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
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 _____