St. Brigid's Infant School

Wellmount Avenue, Finglas West, Dublin 11, D11 F992.

Anti-Bullying Policy

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 Brigid's Infant 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.

    This policy must be read in conjunction with the schools overall Code of Behaviour, Acceptable Use and Communication policies and existing Anti-bullying measures and procedures.

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) A positive school culture and climate which
    - Welcomes 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

    At St Brigid's Infant School, we consider the following to be key elements of a Positive School Culture:
    - We acknowledge the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment.
    - We acknowledge the uniqueness of each individual and their worth as a human being.
    - We promote positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline, and responsibility among all its members.
    - We actively prohibit vulgar, offensive, sectarian, or other aggressive behaviour by any of its members.
    - We have a clear commitment to promoting equity in general and gender equity in particular in all aspects of its functioning.

- We have the capacity to change in response to the needs of the pupils.
- We identify aspects of the curriculum through which positive and sustainable influences can be exerted towards forming pupils' attitudes and values.
- We take particular care of 'at risk' pupils and use systems to identify needs and facilitate early intervention where necessary-thus responding to the needs, fears & anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner.
- St Brigid's Infant School recognises the need to work in partnership with and keep parents informed of procedures to improve relationships within the school community.
- We recognise the right of parents to share in the task of equipping pupils with a range of life skills.
- We recognise the role of other community agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying.
- We promote habits of mutual respect, courtesy, and an awareness of the interdependence of people in groups and communities.
- We promote qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among our members both in school and outside of school.
- We actively encourage positive values and dispositions through monthly themes, and we endeavour to embed these in children's lives (list of values and dispositions attached).
- 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.
- Staff members also share responsibility for modelling positive language and behaviours in their interactions with all members of the school community.

(b) Effective leadership

- The BOM has overall responsibility to ensure that this policy is effective, sustainable, and measured. The BOM must ensure that accountability is of the highest standard and frequently appraise the outcomes of the strategies and measures contained within the policy

- The ISM Team have a clear role to act in a leadership capacity within the school community, stimulating a whole school approach to preventing and tackling bullying – and modelling best practice

- The Principal *of St Brigid's Infant School,* as key leader, strongly influences attitudes and sets standards in relation to dealing with bullying

- All staff working at the school must act as good role models and not misuse authority, but be fair, clear, and consistent in their disciplinary measures.

(c) A school-wide approach

A whole community approach to the problem of bullying is required and our school community comprises of management, teachers, non-teaching staff, pupils, and parents/guardians.

Beyond the school community, bullying behaviour may extend to outside of school. Where this negatively impacts on a school – parents and pupils have a responsibility to support the school in helping to address the issue. This applies particularly (but not exclusively) to cyber bullying.

The assistance or advice of Gardaí, Tusla and Community Workers or school solicitors may be required in some cases.

Collective vigilance is needed throughout the whole school/community sector to identify and deal with issues around bullying in a fair and equitable manner.

(d) A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact

St Brigid's Infant School endeavours to put in place appropriate systems to ensure that ALL relevant members of the school community (parents, pupils, staff and the wider community) have a shared understanding of what constitutes bullying behaviour as defined in this policy (Section 2&3 of Anti Bullying Procedures for Primary & Post Primary Schools).

(e) Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that –

- Build empathy, respect, and resilience in pupils.
- 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).

(f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils

- The lollipop lady is a significant support in addressing and identifying potential bullying scenarios.
- Office and ancillary staff are well placed to inform if any behaviour which may constitute bullying is noticed.

- Teachers and SNAs on yard supervision are well placed to identify any potential bullying concerns and these concerns are shared with class teachers.

(g) Supports for staff

- Regular discussion and review of policy and procedures is essential to support staff on a continuous basis.

- All staff must have a uniform interpretation of what is expected in relation to bullying, how to identify possible bullying behaviours, how to manage disclosures and how to deal effectively with incidents of bullying within the classroom context.

- Staff must be aware that supporting one another is a key aspect of prevention and new/inexperienced members of staff must be given every opportunity to discuss concerns and see model best practice.

- CPD in relation to Anti Bullying Strategies will be supported and encouraged for all members of staff.

(h) Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and

- Staff members have a distinct responsibility to ensure that supervision of pupils in class is effective and consistent

- Supervision in playground areas must be managed and conducted effectively, with particular attention given to 'hot spots' or 'hot times' e.g., arrival & dismissal

(i) 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*

Bullying Behaviours which St. Brigid's Infant School has identified as relevant to our context:``

General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying	- 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 - Persistent exclusion from playground games - 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 - Spitting at someone - The "look" - Invasion of personal space - A combination of any of the types listed.
Cyber	**Denigration**: Spreading rumours, 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/Ask.fm/ Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles • Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures • Abusive posts on any form of communication technology

Identity Based 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).

Homophobic and Transgender	• 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
Race, nationality, ethnic background, and membership of the Traveller community	• 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	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 or terminology such as 'nerd' in a derogatory way
Sexual	• Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching

	• Harassment
Special Educational Needs, Disability	• 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

4. The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:
    - Principal
    - Deputy Principal
    - All class teachers
    - All SET teachers
    - HSCL teacher
    - Childcare workers
    - Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

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:

    School wide approach
    - A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.
    - All school staff will model the values and dispositions that create and foster an environment of respect, kindness, equality, diversity and fairness.
    - 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 any extra-curricular activities that may happen. Pupils will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.
    - The development of a school culture in which positive dispositions and values such as kindness, resilience, patience and connection are fostered and embedded through monthly assemblies and themes.

- The promotion of a positive school and playground environment that encourages and rewards positive behaviour.
- School wide awareness raising on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parents/guardians, and the wider school community.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds and school tours.
- 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.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parents/guardians can access the code of behaviour and the anti-bullying policy on the school website. A paper copy can be distributed upon request also.
- Parents of incoming Junior Infants will be invited to a welcome meeting where their responsibilities and agreed support to the school code of behaviour and anti-bullying policy will be explained and discussed. Parents who cannot attend will be asked to attend on an alternative date.
- Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. The 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.

Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell.
- Identified clear protocols to encourage parents/guardians to approach the class teacher to make an appointment if they suspect that their child is being bullied, in line with our communication policy.
- 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 Stay Safe curriculum is taught in each class level and particular focus is given to telling and who and how to tell.

Implementation of curricula
- The full implementation of the SPHE, RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes when available.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence-based programmes –Stay Safe and Walk Tall programmes.
- The full implementation of the Incredible Years programme in all class levels.

- 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.

Links to other policies

The following policies are particularly relevant to our anti-bullying policy including Code of Behaviour, Child Safeguarding, Acceptable Use, Attendance Strategy, Critical Incident Policy and Plan, Communication Policy and Safety Statement.

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:

Reporting bullying behaviour

- Any pupil or parent/guardian 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, 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

- 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; bearing in mind that this is an infant school, and many instances of immature behaviour can occur.**
- Parents/guardians 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.
- 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 a 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.
- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parent/guardian of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions been taken. The school should give parents/guardians 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 parents/guardians) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his/her parents/guardians 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 parents/guardians 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/guardian is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent/guardian must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedure.
- In the event that a parent/guardian has exhausted the school's complaints procedure and still is not satisfied, the school must advise
    the parent/guardian 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 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. 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.
- The school will store all records in the principal's office.

Formal Stage 2 – Appendix 3 (From DES procedures)

The relevant teacher must use the recording template at **Appendix 3** to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

- 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 has occurred.
- Where the school has decided as part of its anti-bullying policy that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable. This should be in line with the school's code of behaviour.

- When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal. The files will be maintained in a separate folder in the principal's office until the child leaves the school.

  Established intervention strategies
- Teacher interviews with all pupils
- Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress.
- Working with parents/guardians to support school interventions
- No Blame Approach
- Circle Time

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:
   - 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., Buddy System, Circle Time, Friendship Buddies (SET intervention).
   - If pupils require counselling or further supports, the school will endeavour to liaise and refer parents/child to appropriate agencies. 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.

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.

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and otherwise readily accessible. 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 regularly.

A review of this policy and its procedures took place in Oct 2018, Jan 2022 and Jan 2023.

Signed: _Frank Reidy_   Signed: _Margaret O Reilly_
(Chairperson, Board of Management)   (Principal)

Date: __16/1/2023__   Date: __16/1/23__

Appendix:

Positive Values and Dispositions:

September: Playfulness

October: Kindness

November: We love Learning

December: Patient waiting

January: Resilience

February: Connection

March: Hope

April: Laughter

May: Outdoor Creativity

June: The Finale