Anti-Bullying Policy

St. Anne's N.S.,

Ardclough,

Straffan,

Co. Kildare.

Roll no. 17674B

St Anne's National School, Ardclough

Anti-Bullying Policy

1. Rationale

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the National Education Welfare Board (N.E.W.B.), THE Board of Management (BoM) of St Anne's N.S. 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, September 2013'

2. Bullying Prevention in St Anne's

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.
  - 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:
  - Builds empathy, respect and resilience in pupils.
  - Explicitly addresses the issues of cyber-bullying and identity – based bullying including homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils
- Support 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.

3a   What is Bullying ?

In accordance with 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 behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:
- Deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying
- Cyber- Bullying
- 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.

3b Types of Bullying

The following are some of the types of bullying behaviour that can occur amongst pupils:

- **Physical Aggression:**
  This behaviour includes deliberately pushing, shoving, kicking, poking and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While pupils sometimes engage in 'mess fights', they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.

- **Intimidation:**
  Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation: it may be based on the use of very aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon. Particularly upsetting can be a facial expression which deliberately conveys aggression and/or dislike.

- **Isolation/Exclusion and other Relational Bullying**
  This occurs where a certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or the entire class group. This practice is usually initiated by the person engaged in bullying behaviour and can be difficult to detect. It may be accompanied by writing insulting remarks about the pupil in public places, by passing around notes or drawings of the pupil or by whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard. Relational bullying occurs when a person's genuine attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. One of the most common forms includes control: e.g. "Do this or I won't be your friend anymore" (implied or stated); a group ganging up against one person; non-verbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumours or giving someone the "silent treatment".

- **Cyber – Bullying:**
  This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, email, instant messaging (IM) apps, gaming sites, chat-rooms and other online technologies. Being the target of inappropriate or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying. As cyber-bullying uses technology to perpetrate bullying behaviour and does not require face to face contact, cyber-bullying can occur at any time (day or night). Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyber-bullying. For example, a target may be sent homophobic text messages or pictures may be posted with negative comments about a person's sexuality, appearance etc.

- **Name Calling:**
  Persistent name-calling directed at the same individuals which hurts, insults or humiliates should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name calling of this type refers to physical appearance, e.g. size or clothes worn. Accent or distinctive voice characteristics may attract negative attention. Academic ability can also provoke name calling. This tends to operate at two extremes. There are those who are singled out for attention because they are perceived to be weak academically. At the other extreme there are those who, because they are perceived as high achievers are also targeted.

- **Damage to Property:**
  Personal property can be the focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, school books and other learning material or interference with a pupil's bicycle. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.

- **Extortion**

  Demands for money may be made, often accompanied by threats (sometimes carried out in the event of the targeted pupil not delivering on demand). A pupil may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to another who is engaged in bullying behaviour.

4   Roles and Responsibilities

In the school's daily and routine life, the ways in which people interact with each other significantly affect each person's sense of self-worth, belonging and well-being. The fostering of high –quality interpersonal relationships among teachers, students, parents and ancillary staff is a responsibility shared by everyone. All members of the school community have a role to play in the prevention of bullying.

Responsibilities of the Board of Management

- The Board of Management is responsible for ensuring that all members of the school community are enabled to deal effectively with bullying. The Board is committed to providing time and resources for the implementation of the policy. The Board will ensure that proper supervisory and monitoring measures are in place to prevent bullying and to deal with incidents appropriately as they arise. The Board of Management will provide training for staff and pupils in the principles and procedures of a Restorative Justice system.

Responsibilities of School Staff

- To acknowledge that bullying is a shared responsibility within the school.
- To draw upon Restorative Justice Practices, taking into account the age of the pupils involved. To implement prevention and intervention strategies, which build and maintain a safe learning environment for the whole school community.
- To empower students to deal with conflict in constructive ways using Restorative Justice practices.
- To take a pro-active stance regarding bullying by conducting occasional class surveys (anonymous) asking pupils if they have been bullied; if they have seen anyone being bullied; if so, who, when ,what was done, where and by whom?
- To take all reports of bullying seriously and to inform the Principal or Vice Principal that an allegation of bullying is being investigated.

- To document any incidents they find to be bullying, using the 'Bullying Incident Report Form', which is then sent to the Principal or Deputy Principal. (See Appendix 1)

Responsibilities of Pupils:

- To show consideration, respect and support towards others.
- To be able to identify bullying behaviour.
- Not to bully others.
- To tell if they are being bullied, or if they see someone else being bullied.
- To engage in *responsible* reporting when witnessing or experiencing bullying behaviour.
- To feel empathy for targeted members of the school community and, as a result, take safe, fair and sensible action as a bystander.

Responsibilities of Parents:

- To support the school in the implementation of this policy.
- To watch out for signs that their child may be being bullied.
- To speak to the class teacher if their child is being bullied or they suspect that this is happening.
- To instruct their children to tell if they are being bullied or if they have seen other students being bullied.
- To notify the school if they think that their own child is displaying bullying behaviour and to work with the school in addressing the problem.
- Never to directly approach a student or the parent of a student at the school to intervene in behavioural issues.

5. Education and Prevention Strategies

The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyberbullying and identity-based bullying including homophobic and transphobic bulling,) that will be used by the school are as follows:

St Anne's will promote a preventative approach to bullying by implementing the following:

- Developing a whole school Anti-Bullying Policy in collaboration with the whole school community of all staff, pupils, parents and Board of Management.
- All teachers will implement the Social, Personal & Health Education (S.P.H.E.) programme; this includes the Stay Safe, Walk Tall and Alive O programme.
- A copy of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and Code of Behaviour will be given to the parents of the incoming Junior Infants at Parents morning. New parents will be required to sign an undertaking which supports the policy. The revised policy will be circulated to all current parents on an initial basis and their support for the policy will be sought.
- This Anti-Bullying Policy and the school's Code of Behaviour will be available online to all parents and others on the school's website – stannesardclough.ie
- The following anti-bullying initiatives will take place in the school annually:
    - Each class will devise classroom rules at the beginning of each year which will promote inclusion, acceptance of difference and respect for one another. Children from 1st class upwards will sign their acceptance of the Class Code.
    - Lessons which deal specifically with bullying will be undertaken in each class, with an emphasis on openness and discussion in this area. Areas covered include – What is bullying? Forms of bullying, Cyber-bullying, Why do people bully? Bystander bullies, Silent witnesses, Effects of bullying, How does bullying make me feel? What can we do? Preventing bullying, Coping with bullying etc.) .
    - At an age appropriate level.

- The whole school community will be encouraged to become a 'reporting school' whereby everyone is encouraged to report/speak out if they are being bullied or if they witness a bullying situation. (When children inform a teacher of a 'bullying situation' which occurred outside of school time, the teacher will

advise the child to inform his/her parents. The child will be encouraged to ask for their support in resolving the situation. The teacher will also inform the parents herself). Staff will take a pro-active stance regarding bullying by conducting class surveys (anonymous) asking pupils if they have been bullied; if they have seen anyone being bullied; if so, who, when, what was done, where and by whom? (These will be carried out intermittently throughout the school year. All children will be asked to write something in order to preserve anonymity)

- On a daily basis the school "Yard Notebook" will be checked by all class teachers, so that any incident occurring in the playground and recorded in the notebook will be communicated to the teachers involved.

- All teachers involved in yard duty/supervision of children who are suspected of being involved in or a victim of bullying, will be informed of the situation.

- Discussion of the underlying principles of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and Code of Behaviour will occasionally form part of the agenda of staff meetings.

- From time to time guest speakers with an expertise in the area of bullying-prevention (e.g. Bernardos / Web Wise) will be invited to address pupils, staff and parents.

6. Procedures

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);

Step 1 Investigation
Who is responsible for dealing with instances of Bullying?

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

1.   Class Teacher

2.   Any supervising teacher (for example in yard)

3.   Principal or Deputy Principal.

Teachers are advised to take a calm, unemotional problem solving approach when dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.

- 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, (in the case of a child) anonymous reports, of bullying will 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 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 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.
- Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), 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;

- It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset.

- Incidents are generally best 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 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.

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

- It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s).

- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy). This will 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;

- 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.

- Once a teacher has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded by the relevant teacher in the Recording template at **Appendix 1 and a copy given to the Principal or Deputy Principal.**

Step 2 Results of Investigation

In cases where it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, the relevant teacher/s will meet separately with the parent(s) of the two (or more) parties involved as appropriate. The relevant teacher/s will outline the results of the investigation and will explain the actions being taken and the reasons for them, referring them to the school policy. The following steps will be taken:

A) St Anne's will utilise a Restorative Justice Practice approach in its initial stage of resolving the situation. (Restorative justice is an approach to justice that focuses on the needs of the victims and the offenders, as well as the involved community. Victims take an active role in the process, while offenders are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions, to repair the harm they've done – by apologising and doing something constructive to make amends to the person hurt or offended. Restorative justice involves and focuses on the personal needs of both the victim and offender and it provides help for the offender in order to avoid future offences.) All staff will be made aware of the importance of this practice.

B) 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.

C) It must be understood by all those involved (parents and pupils) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his parents and the school.

D) If bullying reoccurs, a formal contract will be entered into by both parties, and the parent(s) of both parties will be informed. The contract will be monitored regularly by the relevant teacher/s to see that the situation is resolved.

E) If after the above, the bullying behaviour recurs, a formal meeting of the child who has engaged in this behaviour, his parent(s), the Principal and the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be held and a formal suspension in line with the school's Code of Behaviour may occur.

F) Bullying behaviour will be adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 working days after the teacher has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred and has recorded it in the 'Bullying Incident Report Form' for the attention of the Principal or Deputy principal.

G) Blank report forms are available from the secretary's office. These completed report forms will be kept in a folder and filed securely in the Principal's office.

Step 3 Follow Up

- 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 or Deputy Principal;

Step 4 Conclusion

- If after the above, the bullying behaviour recurs, a formal meeting of the child who has engaged in this behaviour, his parent(s), the Principal and the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be held and a formal suspension in line with the school's Code of Behaviour may occur.
- 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. The Chairperson of the Board of Management may be contacted by post at the school address or by email at st.annes.ias@eircom.net
- In the event that that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school will advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for children.

7. Programme of Support for Pupils affected by Bullying

The school's programmes of support for working with pupils affected by bullying are as follows:

Responding to Bullying

- Support will be provided for anyone who is bullied by offering them an immediate opportunity to talk about their experience with their teacher or Principal, along with continuing support when they feel they may need it. A child who has been bullied will be assured that the school community will help them and put monitoring procedures in place to safeguard them. They are advised that they have made the correct decision in reporting bullying.
- The school will inform the child's parents of what has happened and of the measures being taken to help them. The parents will be encouraged to report further incidents if they occur.
- Help and support will be sought for a child who has engaged in bullying behaviour. This will include speaking with them to discover why they became involved, informing their parents and continuing to work with them in order to modify their behaviour. The school's Code of Behaviour applies to bullying. The child will be helped to see things from the point of view of the child being bullied. A child who has engaged in bullying behaviour may be excluded from the playground at lunchtime, for example, or subject to special monitoring procedure and if bullying continues they may be suspended in accordance with procedure.
- Further follow up meetings may be arranged between the parties involved to access progress and/or restore relationship.
- Intervention from National Psychological Services (.N.E.P.S.) or counselling service may be considered if deemed necessary.

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. Adult Bullying of Children

All complaints against a teacher are handled under the agreed INTO/CPSMAComplaints Procedure. A parent wishing to make a complaint should approach the class teacher with a view to resolving the complaint. A hard copy of this procedure may be obtained from the school office at any time and is also available at https://www.into.ieROI/InfoforTeachers/ParentTeacherRelations/INTOManagementComplaintsProcedure/.

10. Prevention of Harassment

The Board of Management confirms that St Anne's N.S. will, in accordance with its obligations under the 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

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 17/11/14

12. Publishing of this Policy

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents Association. A copy will be made available to the Department and the Patron as requested.

13. Review

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: _____   Date: 17/11/14

     Marie Griffin

     (Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _____   Date: 17/11/14

     Patricia King (Principal)

Date of next review: JUNE 2015

Appendix 1

__Record of suspected 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	
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 _____

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