**Scoil Bhride  St Brigid’s J.N.S.**

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**Anti-bullying Policy**

**Rationale**

Here at St. Brigid’s J.N.S. we believe that our pupils have the right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment. The ethos of the school is one where values of respect and understanding for all are promoted and expected.

Bullying is a form of anti-social behaviour. It is always wrong and will not be tolerated. It is important, therefore, that the school has a clear written policy to promote this belief, where both pupils and parents/guardians are fully aware that any complaints of bullying will be dealt with firmly, fairly and promptly.

This policy was drawn up in accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB. It fully complies with the requirements of the Anti-bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools (September 2013). It was drawn in consultation with the Board of Management, staff and parents.

**Definition of Bullying**

Bullying is defined as unwanted negative behaviour consisting of physical, verbal or psychological aggression directed by an individual or group against others and which is **repeated over time**. It can occur at any age, in any environment. It can be long or short-term. Bullying may take many different forms. It includes but is not confined to

* Physical aggression
* Damage to property
* Theft of property
* Extortion
* Intimidation
* Isolation
* Deliberate exclusion
* Name calling
* Written notes designed to intimidate another person
* Cyber-bullying, i.e. abusive emailing, texting, social networking\*
* Harassment based on gender, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion and membership of a minority group

**It is important to note that isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour do not fall within the definition of bullying and will be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school’s code of behaviour.**

\*Please note that networking sites have a minimum age limit in order to register. We strongly recommend that children under the age of 13 do not register on social networking sites as directed by Children Online Privacy Protection Act (COPPA, 1998). We advise that parents monitor their children’s use of the internet and technologies to combat cyber-bullying.

All members of the school community have a role to play in the prevention of bullying.

**The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying incidents in St. Brigid’s JNS are as follows:**

**All class teachers**

**Principal**

**Yard**

Teachers record incidents in the yard.

Restorative Questions will be used to resolve issues in the yard.

* What happened?
* Who was hurt?
* What do you think needs to happen now?

The principal reviews yard sheets weekly to identify possible patterns of bullying or inappropriate behaviours which may occur over longer periods of time. Teachers record incidents and monitor suspected bullying behaviour in the class.

**Board of Management**

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
* Build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils
* Address the issues of cyber-bullying where appropriate
* Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils
* Our active culture of welcome, warmth, empathy, respect and inclusion.
* Our SPHE Policy including RSE programme and our school rules will develop friendship, inclusion and an anti bullying ethos.
* ***Daily Restorative Circles used to build empathy and respect in the classroom.***
* ***Active emotional literacy through Restorative Practice circle work.***
* Implementation of regular whole school awareness e.g. Restorative Practice noticeboard, Brookfield Buddies week, Lucky to be me week.
* Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour.
* Ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti bullying policy.
* Prevent the harassment of pupils or staff on any grounds.

**School Staff**

The school staff will foster an atmosphere of friendship, respect and tolerance. Children’s self-esteem will be developed through celebrating individual differences, achievements, acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour and manners and providing opportunities for success throughout the curriculum and school. Teachers will help pupils to develop empathy by discussing feelings and trying to put themselves in the place of others. Relationships with pupils will be based on mutual respect and trust so that pupils will have confidence in the school staff. Teachers will be vigilant, respond sensitively and caringly to pupils who disclose incidents of bullying and investigate all disclosed incidents of bullying. Any discriminatory or derogatory language will be tackled.

Teachers willuse behavioural management strategies, which focus on problem solving and enable pupils to take an active role in finding a solution to problems.

The formal curriculum of the school will also be used to educate all pupils about bullying behaviour. Anti-bullying issues may be raised through the school religion programme, the anti-bullying lessons/pack, the SPHE programme, RSE, ***signposts lessons for multiculturalism***, the Stay Safe programme, the Arts and circle work.

***Teachers will teach two specific anti bullying lessons a term. The children’s work will be displayed on noticeboards to foster a whole school approach to anti bullying.***

***At the beginning of every year the staff will review the anti bullying policy to make sure everyone is aware of the procedure/approach.***

**Pupils**

* Pupils are expected to be tolerant and to have mutual respect for each other and staff
* Pupils are encouraged to use the strategies they have been taught in dealing with unwanted behaviour
* Pupils are advised to always report incidents of bullying, whether they happen to themselves or others, to parents and teachers
* Bystanders are recognised as agents in the eradication of bullying
* Pupils involved in bullying behaviour will be supported as the need arises
* Pupils who are victims of bullying will be supported as the need arises

**Parents**

Parents are asked to

* Encourage positive behaviour and discourage negative behaviour both at home and at school
* Encourage children to solve difficulties without resorting to aggression
* Support the school in its efforts to prevent and tackle bullying

**Publishing and publicising the Anti-bullying Policy**

In order to ensure that St.Brigid’s JNS is effective in tackling bullying this policy will be

* Available in the foyer and parents’ room
* Promoted through the parents association
* Published on the school website
* Brought to the attention of parents at Infant meetings and at enrolment

**Procedures for Reporting and Investigating Bullying Incidents**

1. All allegations of bullying will be noted, investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher so that pupils will gain confidence in telling.The relevant teacher will use his/her professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding the same.
2. Serious incidents will be referred immediately to the Principal.
3. Incidents will be investigated discretely when the teachers will speak separately to the alleged victim, the alleged offender and any witnesses. This will involve the taking of a written record of what happened. When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour , the relevant adult should seek answers to the Restorative Questions with which the children will already be familiar. A calm unemotional problem-solving approach will be taken.
4. In cases where it is determined that bullying has occurred, the Principal will request separate meetings with the parents/guardians of the parties involved. Their assistance will be sought in preventing a repeat of the behaviour.
5. Victims will be assured that the school community will help them and monitoring procedures (teacher observation, checking in with the parent and the child, further meetings with the principal if necessary) will be put in place to safeguard them.
6. Sanctions may follow for the bully such as loss of privileges as appropriate to the situation and age of the child. Help and support will be sought for the bully.
7. Follow-up meetings will be arranged to assess progress and/or restore relationships.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the BOM once in every school year. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the Patron and the Department.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (date).

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(Chairperson, BOM) (Principal)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date of next review: First term 2021/2022