

February 2023

St Thomas NS Peterswell

Anti-Bullying Policy

February 2023

Roll Number: 17502s

Email: stthomasns.ias@eircom.net

Principal: Michael Mulkerrins

- 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 Thomas NS 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. 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**
 - 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
 - (b) Effective leadership**
 - (c) A school-wide approach**
 - (d) A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact**
 - (e) Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that-**
 - build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils
 - explicitly addresses the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying
including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying;
 - (f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils**
 - (g) Supports for staff**
 - (h) Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and**
 - (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.

4. **In St Thomas NS the relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is the class teacher.**

In St Thomas NS the class teacher or teacher on duty (if the incident occurs in the playground) will investigate and deal with the incident in the first instance.

This information will be communicated to the relevant teacher.

If required, the relevant teacher will seek advice from the deputy principal or the principal when deciding if the behaviour constituted bullying.

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber- bullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:

- Regular assemblies where teachers educate the children on issues such as diversity, respect, inclusivity and social interaction, emphasising that St Thomas NS is a caring school and that all children have a right to be safe and happy
- Regular whole school/group sessions on acceptable playground behaviour and school rules in St Thomas NS
- Close supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridor, school grounds, extra-curricular activities
- Clear and open communication between all staff members
- Regular communication with the students' council who will monitor playground happiness
- The Stay Safe Programme is taught in all classes
- SPHE Curriculum will have a number of lessons that deal with anti-bullying issues
- Walk Tall programme
- RSE programme
- The Incredible Years programme
- Friendship Fortnight
- Worry boxes in every classroom where pupils can write a note to the class teacher;
- Anti-Bullying posters visible in all parts of the school
- The schools Anti-Bullying policy will be sent to all new parents along with the Acceptable Use Policy, Mobile Phone Policy and Code of Behaviour

- Pupils with special needs will use social stories to support them with peer interaction;
- The schools mobile phone policy will be strictly implemented by all staff.

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 in St Thomas NS

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, worry box notes will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretaker, cleaner must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher

Guidelines for the relevant teacher investigating alleged bullying in St Thomas NS

- 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.
- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the (relevant)teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether or not bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) 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
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.
- 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
- 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 may face them from the other members of the group after the 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 parent(s)/guardian(s) of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy). The school should give parent(s)/guardian(s) an opportunity to discuss 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 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
- Where a pupil has been found to have engaged in bullying behaviour he /she will be encouraged to empathise with their victim. He / she will be required to sign a contract/ promise to say they will not engage in this behaviour again and bullying will stop. Depending on the severity of the incident the school's behaviour code will come into place and the pupil may be placed on a green or orange card.
- If bullying reoccurs/or there is a very serious incident, the pupil will be sanctioned in accordance with the school's behaviour policy and a red card, referral to the BOM and suspension may result.
- It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parent(s)/ guardian(s)) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parent(s)/ guardian(s) and the school.
- At least once every school term the Principal will provide a report to the BOM setting out the overall number of bullying cases reported by means of the attached school bullying form and confirmation that all cases are being dealt with in accordance with procedures.
- Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with the procedures they are made aware of the school's complaints procedures. If they still remain unsatisfied with the schools interventions, they are referred to the BOM and thereafter the Ombudsman for Children.

Recording bullying behaviour in St Thomas NS

It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner.

1 Informal - pre determination that bullying has occurred.

- All staff must personally log or communicate any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them.
- All incidents must be communicated to the relevant teacher.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
- The relevant teacher must inform the principal of all incidents being investigated.
- The relevant teacher must personally log any reports to them.

2 Formal Stage 1-Determination that bullying has occurred/incident report

- When it is clear to the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must complete a school incident report form which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

3 Formal Stage 2 - Bullying established and investigated formal bullying recording form(see attached) is used

The relevant teacher must use the school's formal bullying recording form attached here 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 occurred;
- When the school's formal bullying form is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy sent to the principal. The copy will be stored in the child's file in the classroom and the original sent to the school office for filing. This will be retained until the pupil reaches the age of 18.

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:

Every in school support will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying. Pupils will be given opportunities to:

- Engage in activities that raise their self-esteem i.e. small group Art/ Craft activities, gardening, sport, assisting young children, buddy systems, peer mentoring/mediation.
- Class teachers may have focused SPHE activities.
- Outside school supports may be sourced through agencies such as NEPs and CAMHs
- A structured and monitored behaviour plan may be put in place to support the pupil.
- Opportunities may be developed to allow confidential reporting for specific victims.
- Outside groups may be employed to run workshops.

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. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____ [date].

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel and published on the school website. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

12. 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

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weebly. 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: _____

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____

Appendix (1): 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

4. Location of incidents

Pupil Concerned	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

Tick Relevant Box(es)
relevant box)(es)

(Tick

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other	

5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern

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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 action taken

Signed: _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date: _____

Date Submitted to Principal/ Deputy Principal: _____

Appendix (2): How You Can Support Your Child

- (A) Support Re Cyber Bullying
- (B) Support Re Other Types of Bullying

(A) Support Re Cyber Bullying

We endorse the advice given from the Irish '[Sticks and Stones](#)' Anti-Bullying Programme. A representative, Patricia Kennedy, wrote the following words in the Irish Daily Mail on October 31, 2012:

"Cyberbullying is NOT 24/7; it's only 24/7 if a child is allowed access to their phone or the internet. Don't let your own ignorance get in the way of common sense. A simple rule is 'no phones after bedtime.' Have a drawer in the kitchen that all phones are left in.

... Try turning off the wifi when you are going to bed to make sure there are no 3am online arguments. The anti-bullying initiative I represent, Sticks and Stones, work with children from all backgrounds, from designated disadvantaged schools to fee-paying schools, and **we are constantly surprised at the level of innocence that most children have in relation to the 'friends' they make online.**

They don't think there are any dangers involved in chatting with strangers online, and they don't think there are any repercussions involved for them regarding what they post.

... In our anti-bullying workshops, children tell us one of the reasons they don't 'tell' about bullying is that parents 'overreact'. Don't be that parent.

If your child tells you that they are being bullied — don't lose your temper; above all don't threaten to take their phone or internet access away — you're just guaranteeing they'll never tell you anything again.

Remain calm and ask questions — who, what, why, where, when. Get the facts, write it down, keep the text/phone messages or take a screen shot from the computer so you are informed when you approach the school, internet or phone provider, or gardaí.

Talk to your children; let them know they can talk to you; keep the channels of communication open."

And we endorse the advice given by the USA's Federal Department of Health:

"Be Aware of What Your Kids are Doing Online

Talk with your kids about cyberbullying and other online issues regularly.

Know the sites your kids visit and their online activities. Ask where they're going, what they're doing, and who they're doing it with.

Tell your kids that as a responsible parent you may review their online communications if you think there is reason for concern. Installing parental control filtering software or monitoring programs are one option for monitoring your child's online behaviour, but do not rely solely on these tools.

Have a sense of what they do online and in texts. Learn about the sites they like. Try out the devices they use.

Ask for their passwords, but tell them you'll only use them in case of emergency.

Ask to "friend" or "follow" your kids on social media sites or ask another trusted adult to do so.

Encourage your kids to tell you immediately if they, or someone they know, is being cyberbullied. Explain that you will not take away their computers or mobile phones if they confide in you about a problem they are having.

Establish Rules about Technology Use

Establish rules about appropriate use of computers, mobile phones, and other technology. For example, be clear about what sites they can visit and what they are permitted to do when they're online. Show them how to be safe online.

Help them be smart about what they post or say. Tell them not to share anything that could hurt or embarrass themselves or others. Once something is posted, it is out of their control whether someone else will forward it.

Encourage kids to think about who they want to see the information and pictures they post online. Should complete strangers see it? Real friends only? Friends of friends? Think about how people who aren't friends could use it.

Tell kids to keep their passwords safe and not share them with friends. Sharing passwords can compromise their control over their online identities and activities."

We encourage you to also look at links for parents on our school website re Cyber Bullying.

(B) Support Re Other Types of Bullying

Teaching a child to say “NO” in a good assertive tone of voice will help deal with many situations. A child’s self image and body language may send out messages to potential bullies.

Parents should approach their child’s teacher by appointment if the bullying is school related. It is important for you to understand that bullying in school can be difficult for teachers to detect because of the large numbers of children involved. Teachers will appreciate bullying being brought to light. School bullying requires that parents and teachers work together for a resolution.

Sometimes parental advice to a child is to “hit back” at the bully if the abuse is physical. This is not always realistic as it requires a huge amount of courage and indeed sometimes makes the situation worse.

Children should not be encouraged to engage in violent behaviour. Teaching children to be more assertive and to tell is far more positive and effective.

It is important to be realistic; it will not be possible for a single child to assert his/her rights if attacked by a group. Children should be advised to get away and tell in situations such as this.

Keep an account of incidents to help you assess how serious the problem is. Many children with a little help overcome this problem very quickly.

What If Your Child Is Bullying?

1. Don’t panic. This may be a temporary response to something else in the child’s life e.g. a new baby, a death in the family, a difficult home problem etc. Give your child an opportunity to talk about anything that could be upsetting him/her.
2. Don’t punish bullying by being a bully yourself. Hitting and verbal attack will make the situation worse. Talk to your child and try to find out if there is a problem. Explain how the victim felt. Try to get the child to understand the victim’s point of view. This would need to be done over time.
3. Bullies often suffer low self esteem. Use every opportunity you can to praise good, considerate, helpful behaviour. Don’t only look for negatives.
4. Talk to your child’s teacher and find out more about your child’s school behaviour. Enlist the teacher’s help in dealing with this. It is important that you both take the same approach.
5. If the situation is serious you may need to ask the school or G.P. to refer your child to the child guidance clinic for help.

APPENDIX (3): Types of Behaviour Involved in Cyber Bullying

These guidelines provide assistance in identifying and describing the types of behaviour involved in cyber bullying. The means of cyber bullying are constantly changing, and the following list of types of bullying behaviour can be expanded in light of the experience of the school community:

Types of Behaviour in Cyber Bullying...

1. Hate Sites

- Encouraging other people to join the bullying by publishing someone's personal details or linking to their social network page.
- Abusive messages.
- Transmitting abusive and/or threatening messages.
- Chat rooms and discussion forums.
- Posting cruel and/or abusive comments about someone.

2. Mobile Phones

- Sending humiliating and abusive video messages or photographic images messages.
- Making silent or abusive phone calls.
- Sending abusive text messages.
- Interactive gaming.
- Locking victims out of games.
- Spreading false rumours about someone.
- Hacking into someone's account.
- Sending viruses.
- Sending hacking programs to another person.
- Unauthorised interference with a computer device.

3. Abusing Personal Information

- Transmitting personal photos, videos emails.
- Blogs Posting blogs where others could see them without the owner of the blog's permission.