office@brureens.ie

www.brureens.info

St. Patrick's N.S.
Bruree,
Co. Limerick.

063-90896

St. Patrick's N.S.
Bruree Anti-Bullying Policy

The St. Patrick's N.S. believes that each pupil has a right to an education free from fear and intimidation.

The school regards bullying as a serious infringement of individual rights and a serious threat to the self-esteem and self-confidence of targeted pupil(s). Therefore, it does not tolerate bullying of any kind.

Every report of bullying is treated seriously and dealt with, having due regard for the wellbeing of the targeted pupil(s) and the perpetrator(s).

The immediate priority, should a bullying incident occur, is ending the bullying, (*thereby protecting the person(s) being targeted*) and resolving the issues and restoring the relationships involved insofar as is practicable using a "Reform, not Blame" approach.

All pupils are expected to contribute to the creation and maintenance of a safe environment in the school. On becoming aware of any bullying situation, in or outside the school, involving members of the school community they should notify a trusted responsible adult. Bullying behaviour is too serious not to report.

Pupils' participation in school life in general is encouraged through existing school structures. Awareness of bullying, and willingness to take action to prevent or stop it, is part of this participation.

Anti-Bullying Policy

1. In accordance with the requirements of the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000* and the code of behavior guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of St. Patrick's N.S. has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behavior. 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 recognizes 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 behavior:

    ● 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 behavior 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 including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying;
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
- Supports for staff;
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behavior (including use of established intervention strategies); and
- 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 behavior, 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 behavior 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 behavior, 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 behavior.

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 behavior.

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

This definition includes a wide range of behaviour, whether verbal or written, whether physical or social, whether targeting person or property, whether carried out directly or indirectly or through any electronic or other medium, which could harm a pupil or undermine her/his self-esteem or self-confidence.

Appendix 1 gives a list of specific examples of bullying behaviour. This list is not exhaustive.

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.*

4. The "Relevant Teacher(s)" for investigating and dealing with bullying in this school is/are as follows:
   - **The class teacher**
   - The principal

   (*"At primary level, the relevant teacher will normally be the class teacher."* Procedures 6.8.3).

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity based bullying) used by the school are as follows:
   - The anti-bullying module of the SPHE programme as it applies during each school year,
   - A school wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.
   - The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping and highlight the importance and unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
   - The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Pupils will be provided opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.
   - May use at least five awareness-raising exercises per school year for each class group (*e.g. from the "Awareness-Raising" strand of the Anti-Bullying Campaign, via its website*), pro-actively explaining the nature and variety, causes, consequences and unacceptability of bullying.
     - Pupils are helped to examine the issue of bullying in a calm rational way, outside of the tense context of particular bullying incidents. In the process they are made more aware of the nature of bullying and the various forms that it can take.
     - Pupils are made aware that the consequences of bullying behaviour are always bad for those who are targeted, even if this is not always obvious at the time.
     - Pupils are encouraged to recognise, reject and report bullying behaviour, either spontaneously or through questionnaires that are regularly used in the school.

   Through presentations or other exercises, the school staff and parents/guardians are made aware of the nature of bullying and the signs that might indicate that a pupil is being bullied. They are encouraged to be vigilant in watching out for signs of bullying and to report any suspicion of bullying they may have to the "Relevant Teacher" (in the case of staff members) or any staff member (in the case of parents/guardians).

   Through regular reports in school newsletters and other communications as well as at meetings with parent/guardian groups parents/guardians are regularly informed of the activities of the school and encouraged to support its work.
   - An annual anti-bullying/friendship day/week
   - Anti-bullying signs and messages will be displayed around the school. Positive messages that promote friendship and caring attitude will also be displayed.
   - The Stay Safe will be fully implemented at appropriate times and levels in the school.
   - Guest speakers may be invited to address staff and parent groups at regular intervals in relation to various types of bullying.

- Delivery of the Garda SPHE programme at primary level. This programme, delivered by local community Garda, cover issues around personal safety and cyber bullying.
- Webwise programme will be taught on a regular basis in the school. This programme teaches safe and responsible internet use.
- Clear protocols are in place to encourage parents/guardians to approach the school they suspect that their child is being bullied. These protocols were developed as part of our communication policy.
- The Acceptable Use Policy was developed in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that access to technology within the school is strictly monitored.
- School Policies: The following policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to bullying include; Code of Behaviour, Child Safeguarding Statement, Risk Assessment, Supervision of Pupils, Acceptable Use Policy, Attendance, Communication Policy.
- The school's approach to tackling and preventing bullying will take particular account of the needs of pupils with disabilities or with SEN, will join up with other relevant school policies and supports and will endeavor to ensure that all the services that provide for such pupils work together. Approaches to decreasing the likelihood of bullying for pupils with SEN 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.

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 behavior are as follows:
   - The 'relevant teacher' investigates all instances of reported or suspected bullying behaviour with a view to establishing the facts and bringing any such behaviour to an end.
   - 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 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 is to be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are behaving responsibly.
   - Non-teaching staff such as special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers, cleaners are 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 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
   - Teachers will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.
   - The School, through the 'Relevant Teacher' reserves the right to ask any pupil to write an account of what happened, as part of an investigation. This will be a standard procedure and does not necessarily imply that a pupil is guilty of misbehaviour.
   - Pupils who are alleged to have been involved in bullying behaviour are interviewed by the 'Relevant Teacher' to establish the nature and extent of the behaviour and any reasons for it.

Interviews will be conducted outside the classroom in a sensitive manner with due respect to the rights of all those involved. If a group has been involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first and, thereafter, as a group when each child will be asked for his/her account of what happened

- The primary aim of the teacher investigating bullying is to resolve issues and to restore relationships (rather than to apportion blame).

- In cases where the relevant teacher/principal has determined that bullying has occurred the student will be informed that he/she is in breach of the schools anti-bullying policy. The teacher/principal will inform the pupil of any sanctions that may apply under the schools Code of Behaviour. Efforts will be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.

- The parents/guardians of the parties involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken. The school will give parents/guardians 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.

- 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 or her parents/guardians and the school.

- When an investigation is completed and/or a bullying situation is resolved the 'Relevant Teacher' will complete a report, to include the findings of the investigation, the strategy adopted and the outcome of the intervention, as well as any other relevant information.

- All documentation regarding bullying incidents and their resolution is retained securely in the school.

Reporting

- 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 must be recorded by the relevant teacher in the standardised recording template (See Appendix)
- A copy of this report must be given to the Principal
- At least once in every school term, the Principal will provide a report to the Board of Management setting out:
  - ▪ The overall number of bullying cases reported to the Principal since the previous report to the Board
  - ▪ Confirmation that all cases have been, or are being, dealt with in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy and the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:
   - Bullied pupils:
     - Ending the bullying behaviour,
     - Changing the school culture to foster more respect for bullied pupils and all pupils,

- Changing the school culture to foster greater empathy towards and support for bullied pupils,
- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the awareness-raising programme,
- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the speedy identification of those responsible and speedy resolution of bullying situations,
- Making adequate counseling facilities available to pupils who need it in a timely manner,
- Helping bullied pupils raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school).

- Bullying pupils:
  - Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are doing the right and honorable thing and giving them praise for this,
  - Making adequate counseling facilities available to help those who need it learn other ways of meeting their needs besides violating the rights of others,
  - Helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school),
  - Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils' feelings of self-worth,
  - In dealing with negative behavior in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child,
  - Circle time may be used with certain groups where a deeper discussion of bullying takes place and of the effects on the victims of bullying.

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. The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps as 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 reviewed by the Board of Management on _____.

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, is readily accessible to parents on request and has been provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills and to 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 website and provided to the Parents' Association. Parents will also be notified through the school newsletter.   A record of the review and its outcome will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills and to the patron if requested.

Chairperson of BoM.   Principal:

_____   _____

Date: Date:

_____   _____

Date of next review:

_____

Appendix 1

Bullying can take a number of forms. These may include any of the following (this list is not exhaustive):

- **Repeated aggressive behaviour/attitude/body language, for example:**
  Shouting and uncontrolled anger,
  Personal insults,
  Verbal abuse,
  Offensive language directed at an individual,
  Continually shouting or dismissing others,
  Public verbal attacks/criticism,
  Domineering behaviour,
  Open aggression,
  Offensive gestures and unwanted physical contact.

- **Intimidation, either physical, psychological or emotional, for example:**
  Treating in a dictatorial manner,
  Ridicule,
  Persistent slagging,
  Deliberate staring with the intent to discomfort.
  Persistent rudeness in behaviour and attitude toward a particular individual.
  Asking inappropriate questions/making inappropriate comments re. personal life/family
  Asking inappropriate questions/making inappropriate comments re. social life or schoolwork.

- **Interference with property, for example:**
  Stealing/damaging books or equipment
  Stealing/damaging clothing or other property
  Demanding money with menaces
  Persistently moving, hiding or interfering with property
  Marking/defacing property

- **Undermining/Public or Private Humiliation, for example:**
  Condescending tone,
  Deliberately withholding significant information and resources,
  Writing of anonymous notes,
  Malicious, disparaging or demeaning comments,
  Malicious tricks/derogatory jokes,
  Knowingly spreading rumours,
  Belittling others' efforts, their enthusiasm or their new ideas,
  Derogatory or offensive nicknames (name-calling),
  Using electronic or other media for any of the above (cyber bullying),
  Disrespectfully mimicking a particular individual in his/her absence,
  Deliberately refusing to address issues focusing instead on the person.

- **Ostracising or isolating, for example:**
  Deliberately marginalising an individual
  Deliberately preventing a person from joining a group,
  Deliberately preventing from joining in an activity, schoolwork-related or recreational
  Blaming a pupil for things