St. Benedict's National School

Anti - Bullying Policy

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. Benedict's Primary 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 (2013).

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. This policy will set out key principles of best practice for both preventing and tackling bullying and in so doing the school is committed to developing:

- A positive school culture and climate which;

  o is welcoming of difference and diversity and based on inclusivity

  o encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment

  o 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

  o build empathy, respect and resilience in children: and

  o explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying.

  o Effective supervision and monitoring of children

  o Supports for staff

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

  o On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the school's anti-bullying policy and procedures.

As outlined in *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013)*

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:

a) Deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying

b) Cyber-bullying

c) Identity-based bullying including homophobic and 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 <u>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools (2013)</u> –

<u>Appendix 1</u>

<u>Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying</u>

The primary aim 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; Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s)) understand this approach from the outset.

Reporting bullying behaviour

- 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, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant class teacher.

- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

Procedures for monitoring & recording of bullying behaviour

The Board of management acknowledges that good supervision and monitoring systems of bullying behaviour is vitally important and can lead to early intervention and an early resolution. Consequently, a consistent and clear approach will be used to deal with incidents of bullying behaviour which will involve intervention strategies, recording, investigating and following up of incidents as they occur.

Whilst a parent or child may bring a concern regarding bullying behaviour to any teacher in the school the member of staff with initial responsibility for investigating and dealing with the allegation will be the child's class teacher.

- When a pupil or parent reports a bullying concern to a teacher he/she will investigate as a professional and in a calm and unemotional problem solving approach.

- The class teacher will record the nature of the behaviour and details of any incident. The class teacher will then bring the matter to the attention of the Assistant Principal responsible and the school Principal.

- The teacher will then investigate the matter. The class teacher will listen to pupil/parent ensuring privacy at all times with due regard to the pupil/s involved and will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why.

- If involvement of other pupils is necessary to resolve the situation this will be done in a professional manner by the teacher while at all times striving to maintain relationships between all parties. Each pupil involved will be interviewed individually

at first and thereafter as a group where each pupil will be asked for his/her account of what happened. This could be verbal account or a written account of the incident.

- Making an informed decision the class teacher will exercise professional judgement to determine whether bullying has taken place and how to resolve the situation.
- If the class teacher finds that a child has engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be outlined to the pupil who has engaged in bullying behaviour that the school anti bullying policy has been breached.
- Parents of all parties involved will be contacted to inform them of the matter and explain what actions are being taken.
- Bullying incidents of a serious nature /or those incidents which have not been resolved after a 20-day period will be reported to Principal/Deputy Principal
- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately addressed the relevant teacher must take the following factors into account:
  - Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased
  - Whether the relationship/issues between all parties has been restored
  - Whether feedback has been received from parties involved, their parents, Principal/Deputy Principal
- 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 policy
- 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
- Where a parent is not satisfied that the bullying incident has not been dealt with in accordance with these procedures then the parent must be referred to the school's complaints procedures. Where the parent is still dissatisfied following on from complaints procedures the school must advise the parents 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 behaviour are as follows:

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. The school's current reporting log/form (Appendix 2) should be used to record alleged incidents of bullying
- 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.
- All log/forms should be kept on the school file of the child who is being bullied & if necessary a copy should be kept on the file of the child who is or has been engaged in bullying behaviour

The relevant teacher must use the recording template at Appendix 2 to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

a) 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;

b) In certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable. Teachers should use professional judgement but in general for serious cases of physical aggression and cyber bullying the principal/deputy principal should be informed.

When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal. All records will be retained in line with the school's record keeping policy.

<u>Suggested intervention strategies for children affected by bullying behaviour</u>

St. Benedict's NS will view bullying behaviour as part of a continuum of behaviour and will be linked to the Code of Behaviour of the school.

- Maintaining a close linked with parents will be imperative in assisting pupil wo may have been bullied, or the pupil who engaged in bullying behaviour.
- The class teacher monitors all parties involved to ensure that the bullying behaviour has ceased.
- Supports for pupils who have been involved in bullying is an integral part of this Anti-Bullying policy. For the pupil involved in bullying it may be necessary to develop their social skills and build self-esteem. Supports may include;
  - Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process
  - Pastoral care system
  - Buddy / Peer mentoring system
  - Student Support Team
  - Group work such as circle time
- In cases where the school has serious concerns in relation to managing the behaviour or require further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies for advice. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or those involved in the bullying behaviour.

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. Where a case of bullying is suspected or reported the relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is the Class Teacher. Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it. This work is closely supported and monitored by both the Deputy Principal and Principal.

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, will be published on the school website and is readily accessible to parents and pupils on request. 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 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 be readily accessible to parents and pupils on request and provided to the Parents/Teachers Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

This policy was ratified by staff and board of management on _____.

Signed: _____ (Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: Padraic Flesk (Principal)

Appendix 1: Examples of Bullying Behaviour

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 • Teasing • 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 • The "look" • Invasion of personal space • A combination of any of the types listed.

Cyber	• **Denigration**: Spreading rumors, 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

Appendix 2: 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 (tick relevant box(es))*		4. **Location** of incidents (tick relevant box(es))*	
Pupil concerned		Playground	
Other Pupil		Classroom	
Parent		Corridor	
Teacher		Toilets	
Other		School Bus	
		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 _____

Appendix 3: Ensuring a positive school culture and climate

- Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.

- Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.

- Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school.

- Catch them being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.

- Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN.

- Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language is used

- In St. Benedict's we have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines. Children routinely receive credits for being kind

- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.

- Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use.

- Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.

- Actively involve parents and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media.

- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.

- Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.

- Each staff member actively watches out for signs of bullying behaviour.

- Ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.

- School staff can get pupils to help them to identify bullying "hot spots" and "hot times" for bullying in the school.

- Support the establishment and work of student councils.

Appendix 4: Education and prevention strategies

School-wide approach

- 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 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 with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.
- Whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develops an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it-prevention and intervention.
- An annual audit of professional development needs with a view to assessing staff requirements through internal staff knowledge/expertise and external sources
- Professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teacher(s)
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra- curricular activities. 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.
- Involvement of the students themselves in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Buddy system, mentoring, Lunchtime Pals and other student support activities that can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school-to displayed publicly in classrooms and in common areas of the school.

- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parent(s)/guardian(s)s are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school (every year).
- The implementation of regular whole school awareness measures e.g. a dedicated notice board in the school and classrooms on the promotion of friendship, and bullying prevention; annual Friendship Week and parent(s)/guardian(s) seminars; annual or term or monthly student surveys; regular school or year group assemblies by principal, deputy principal, year heads etc.
- Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This 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, e.g.:
  - Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
  - Hand note up with homework.
  - Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
  - Administer a confidential questionnaire to all pupils.
  - To ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling
  - If they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Identify clear protocols to encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied. The protocol should be developed in consultation with parents.
- 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 listing of supports currently being used in the school and the identification of other supports available to the school e.g. Care Team/ Student Council
- www.bullyingawarenessweek.org for Bullying Prevention Strategies in Schools

Implementation of curricula

- The full implementation of the SPHE curriculum and the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.

- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.

- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes, e.g. Cool School Lessons, Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme.

- *Possible* school wide delivery of lessons on

  ✔ **Relational aggression,**

  ✔ **Cyber Bullying/Safety,**

  ✔ **Diversity and Interculturalism,**

  ✔ **Role of Community Gardaí,** to cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying

- 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.

- School policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to bullying are:

  Code of Behaviour

  SPHE

  Child Protection Policy

  Supervision of Pupils,

  Acceptable Use policy

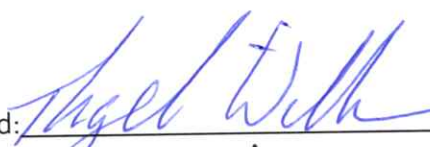 Attendance

Appendix 5

Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation

The Board of Management must undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation. The following checklist must be used for this purpose. The checklist is an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. In order to complete the checklist, an examination and review involving both quantitative and qualitative analysis, as appropriate across the various elements of the implementation of the school's anti-bullying policy will be required.

Yes /No

Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools?*	Yes
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	Yes
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff?	Yes
Is the Board satisfied that school staff is sufficiently familiar with the policy and procedures to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy and procedures in their day to day work?	Yes
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	Yes
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	Yes
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	Yes
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	Yes
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	Yes
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	Yes

Has the Board discussed how well the school is handling all reports of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and not therefore included in the Principal's periodic report to the Board?	Yes
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	No
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	No
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	No
Has the data available from cases reported to the Principal (by the bullying recording template) been analysed to identify any issues, trends or patterns in bullying behaviour?	Yes
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	No
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	No

Signed: _____ (Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: Padraic Sleak _____ (Principal)

Date: 4/10/21

Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the anti-bullying policy

To: Department of Education and Skills/ NEWB/Túsla/Patron

The Board of Management of *St Benedict's Primary School* wishes to inform you that:

o The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of: _4 / 10 /2 1_   .

o This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in **Appendix 5** of the Department's *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.*
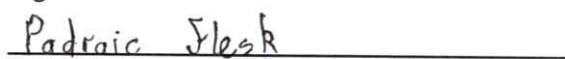
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Chairperson, Board of Management

Date _4 - 10 - 21_

Signed

Padraic Flesk

Principal

Date _4/10/21_