

St. Paul's Secondary School

OUGHTERARD, CO. GALWAY H91 PT86

Tel: (091) 552689 Email: admin@stpaulsoughterard.ie

St Paul's Secondary 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 Paul's Secondary School, Oughterard 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.

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; and
- promotes respectful relationships across the school community;

Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures)-

- Effective leadership;
- A school-wide approach;
- A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact
- 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;
- ensure consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
- on-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

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 (defined as bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, e-mail, instant messaging, apps, gaming sites, chat rooms and other technologies. As cyberbullying uses technology to perpetrate bullying behaviour and does not require face to face contact, cyberbullying can occur at any time - day or night. While cyber-bullying often takes place at home and at night the impact can often be felt at school.

Cyber-bullying in a social networking or blogging context can include

- Posting harsh messages or threats on a social network, profile or blog that belongs to the victim or the perpetrator
- Uploading manipulated images or other images taken without the victim's knowledge or consent
- Using the personal information disclosed by the victim against them in a different and damaging context
- Using the public forum to damage the victim's reputation
- Setting up a profile page or blog, posing as the victim and posting provocative messages or humiliating posts
- SMS text messages, phone calls, e mails, picture or video clips

Cyberbullying does not only occur between peers – members of teaching staff can also be bullied by students. This may take the form of inappropriate postings on social media, for example. If the cyber-bullying creates a hostile environment at work for the teacher or impinges on his/her rights at work it requires to be investigated

- 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.

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

The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows: (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

Any member of teaching staff including Year Heads, the Deputy Principal or the Principal is deemed to be a relevant teacher in the context of 6.8.3 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Education and prevention strategies:

St. Paul's Secondary School is fully committed to the following principles of best practice in preventing bullying behaviour:

Maintaining a positive school culture and climate that

- is inclusive, welcoming of difference, is open, supportive and encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour
- makes it clear to all members of the school community (including school management, teachers, pupils, parents, coaches, ancillary staff) that bullying of any kind is unacceptable behaviour
- promotes respectful relationships across the school community. The school will focus on building empathy and respect in all members of the school community by modelling empathy and respect in all dealings with pupils and other members of the school community

Students will be provided with opportunities to understand causes and effects of bullying, cyber-bullying, the issue of identity based bullying including homophobic and transphobic bullying. Every reasonable effort will be made by the school to ensure that the full potential of the SPHE and RSE curricula are exploited to combat bullying. LGBT posters will be displayed (as appropriate) on notice boards throughout the school during LGBT week.

The school will carry out an Anti-Bullying campaign annually e.g. slogans and drawings to be done during SPHE and posters to be displayed around the school. The Junior Cycle SPHE curriculum includes anti-bullying modules in 1st, 2nd and 3rd year.

Film clips, audio clips and class discussions are used to supplement the book. Materials are sourced from the NCCA and the HSE.

Students complete a Wellbeing survey at the end of Term 1 and also in during term 3, usually in April. This allows them the opportunity to disclose any wellbeing/bullying issues that they may be having or which they are aware of.

Bullying surveys (from Tools/Incidents section of “Bullying in Irish Education”) will be carried out, results will be followed up on – contracts signed and kept in office.

Anti-bullying activities in CSPE, RE, and any other curricula where it may arise – e.g. English poetry/short courses, to be taken advantage of and bullying causes effects explored.

The school will publish the school anti-bullying policy on the school website.

Staff will be involved in the review of the policy at agreed intervals.

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 (see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures) :

- Where a member of teaching staff has a concern about a student being bullied, either as a result of a personal observation or as a result of receiving a report from a third party, s/he may investigate and deal with the matter in accordance with the procedures set out in Section 6.8 of the DES Procedures.
- Alternatively, the teacher may refer the matter to the Principal or Deputy Principal. Indeed, where a teacher is concerned that a particular bullying episode is causing serious upset to a student, staff member or other person, s/he should bring it to the attention of either the Deputy or Principal at the earliest opportunity.
- The school reserves the right to apply its anti-bullying policy in respect of bullying that occurs at a location, activity, function or programme that is not school related if in the opinion of the principal and/or the board of Management the alleged bullying has created a hostile environment at school for the victim, has infringed on the rights of the victim at the school and/or has materially or substantially disrupted the education process or the orderly operation of the school.
- 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 apportion blame)
- 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 must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher

- Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, SNAs, study supervisors, caretakers, cleaners, sports coaches, those taking extra-curricular activities and those driving school buses will be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them to either a teacher or the Deputy Principal or the Principal
- Pupils and parents are requested 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
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents
- 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 what, when, where, who and why.
- 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.
- It may be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incidents.
- In cases where the relevant teacher determines that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (with reference to the school policy). The school should give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the action being taken by the school for their 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 and get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
- It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required as per school Code of Behaviour this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined and, his/her parents and the school.
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should 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.
- In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after

(s)he has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred it must be recorded by the relevant teacher in the recording template at Appendix 3 of the procedures.

- 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:
 1. Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased
 2. Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable
 3. Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable
 4. Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal
- Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with the Procedures, the parent must be referred as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures. The parent should be advised of his/her right to make an appeal to the school's Board of Management. Such appeals should be submitted in writing setting out the grounds for the appeal, to the Chairperson of the Board within 15 school days of the parent/guardian informing the school that he/she is of the opinion that the school/college has not dealt with the bullying case in accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.
- In the event where a parent, having exercised his/her appeal to the Board of Management, is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Procedures for recording Bullying Behaviour

While all reports of bullying (including anonymous reports) must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher will use his/her professional judgement regarding the records to be kept of information received, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved with the bullying behaviour;

Where the relevant teacher has established that bullying has occurred, s/he must keep appropriate written records which will assist him/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved;

The relevant teacher must use the recording template at Appendix 3 to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

1. In cases where s/he considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after s/he has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred; and
2. Where it is necessary to report serious bullying behaviour immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal

3. The non-consensual sharing of sexting content always warrants a report (using Appendix 3 to record the incident) regardless of whether the issue is resolved within 20 days and whether the teacher thinks the incident warrants a report. The sharing of explicit images is an unacceptable and absolutely prohibited behaviour, with serious consequences and sanctions for those involved. All incidents involving creating, storing or sharing of explicit images of children under the age of 17 will be reported to the Gardaí and Túsla

In each of the above circumstances at 1. 2 & 3, the recording template at appendix 3 must be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

At any point in the investigation/resolution of the bullying matter, the relevant teacher may seek the advice and support of the Principal or Deputy Principal while still retaining responsibility for the matter. Also, at any point in the investigation of the matter the relevant teacher may hand over the matter to the Principal/Deputy Principal. In doing so, however, s/he must complete the recording template at appendix 3, retain a copy of the completed template in his/her files and provide a copy for the Principal/Deputy Principal.

Referral of Serious Cases to the HSE

In situations where “the incident is serious and where the behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive, the school must consult the HSE Children and Family Social Services with a view to drawing up an appropriate response, such as a management plan”.

Programme of Supports for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:

Students who have been bullied will be:

- Offered appropriate counselling
- Provided with opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise self-esteem, develop their social skills and build resilience
- The year head will monitor how the student is coping and to ensure that there are no further problems by meeting them at intervals

Students who have been involved in bullying behaviour will be:

- Provided with counselling to help them to learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others and
- Provided with appropriate opportunities to build their self-esteem and feelings of self-worth

Students who observe incidents of bullying behaviour will be encouraged to discuss them with their teachers and their parents and to avail of counselling where they feel it may assist them to cope effectively with what they have experienced.

Supervision and Monitoring of Anti-Bullying in this school

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.

The implementation and effectiveness of the School's anti-bullying policy will be an agenda item for all staff meetings – so the concerns about the policy and/or the welfare of individual students can be shared and effectively addressed.

Data gathered through the reporting templates will be collated and analysed annually with a view to monitoring levels of bullying behaviour and identifying issues requiring attention. This analysis will compile the information gathered through the bullying surveys.

At least once in every school term, the Principal will provide a report to the Board of Management setting out the following:

1. The overall number of bullying cases reported (by means of the bullying recording template) since the previous report to the Board.
2. Confirmation that all cases referred via the recording template 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. The minutes of the Board of management's meetings will record the Principal's report but in doing so will not include any identifying details of the students involved.

Annual Review by the Board of Management

The Board of Management will undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation, using the checklist in Appendix 4 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

The Board will ensure that an action plan is in place to address any areas of improvement identified by the annual review.

Written notification that the review has taken place will be made available to school personnel, published on the school web site, and provided to the Parent's Association.

Details of the review will be recorded in the minutes of the Board meeting that adopted the review and a record and its outcome will be made available, if requested to the Patron and the DES.

Prevention of Harassment

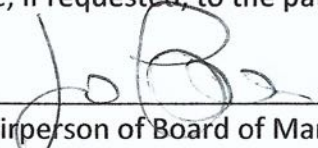
The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of pupils or staff or the harassment of pupils or staff on any of the nine grounds specified i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.


Policy Adoption & Review

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management of St Paul's Secondary School on 4th September 2024.

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). 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 (or where none exists, be otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: 
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: 
(Principal)

Date: 4/9/24

Date: 4/9/24

Date of next review: September 2025

Appendix 3 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))*

Pupil concerned	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Pupil	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))*

Playground	<input type="checkbox"/>
Classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corridor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Toilets	<input type="checkbox"/>
School Bus	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

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	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cyber-bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>
Damage to Property	<input type="checkbox"/>	Intimidation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Isolation/Exclusion	<input type="checkbox"/>	Malicious Gossip	<input type="checkbox"/>
Name Calling	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

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9. Details of actions taken

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Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

* **Note:** The categories listed in the tables 3, 4 & 6 are suggested and schools may add to or amend these to suit their own circumstances.