

# ST. BRIGID'S GNS, KILLESTER, DUBLIN 5



## ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

### SECTION 1

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the National Education Welfare Board, the Board of Management (BOM) of St. Brigid's GNS, Killester 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.

### SECTION 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 positive school culture and climate which** is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity; encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; promotes respectful relationships across the school community;
- **Effective leadership**
- **A school-wide approach**
- **A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact**
- **Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that** build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; 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 behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies)**
- **On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.**

### SECTION 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.

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Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition will be dealt with in accordance with St. Brigid's GNS Code of behaviour. 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.

## SECTION 4

**In St. Brigid's GNS, the relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows:**

- Class teacher (initially)
- The Senior Management Team: Principal/Deputy Principal

## SECTION 5

**The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by St. Brigid's GNS are as follows:**

The **Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum**, including the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes support the anti-- bullying policy.

The Stay Safe Programme is taught to selected classes (Senior Infants, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>) each year.

The school's **anti--bullying policy will be discussed with the pupils. Pupil's will be taught rules for keeping safe from bullies** (from Personal Safety Skills – Stay Safe Programme) (1) Say 'No' using assertive body language and eye contact (2) Get away (3) Tell someone.

**Teaching strategies that make use of cooperative and collaborative learning** are used regularly across all curricular areas. This helps to build acceptance of and respect for other pupils and helps pupils work more cooperatively with others. Methodologies to explore and express feelings in a safe and respectful environment e.g. circle time and role play will also be used by teachers with a view to preventing bullying.

**Teachers and non-teaching school staff regularly praise and positively reinforce acceptable and/or improved pupil behaviour.** This helps in creating a school culture which discourages bullying type behaviour. Positive self-esteem is fostered among the pupils by celebrating individual differences, by acknowledging good behaviour and by providing opportunities for success. As self-esteem is a major factor in determining behaviour, St.Brigid's GNS, through both its curricular and extra-curricular activities, provide pupils with opportunities to develop self-worth.

**School staff are particularly vigilant in monitoring pupils who are considered at risk of bullying/who are being bullied.** Particular attention is also focused on pupils with SEN.

**Cyber-Bullying at school requires access to technology.** In St. Brigid's GNS, pupils working with technology have access to internet only under the supervision of teacher. Pupils do not have access to their mobile/smartphones during the school day. Prevention and awareness raising measures will also deal explicitly with cyber-bullying in the senior classes.

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**Social Media-** St Brigid's GNS, in agreement with age restrictions set by social media applications, strongly urges parents not to allow their children use social media under the age of thirteen. Parents of fifth and sixth class students are reminded of social media age restrictions before and after Christmas. If issues arise within class as a result of students using social media, further notification will be sent to parents to consider restricting their child's access to social media applications.  
(Appendix 2: Social Media Age Restrictions Notice)

**Identity based & homophobic insults** will be treated in exactly the same way as racist or other insults – it will be explained to the pupils that such insults are hurtful and not acceptable.

**Ongoing training and support for school staff** on recognising bullying behaviour and dealing with reports of bullying behaviour and in implementing St. Brigid's GNS Anti-Bullying Policy.

**Preparation of a Parent Advice Sheet** to alert about the nature of bullying behaviour, how to recognise signs of bullying and how to report concerns to the school. This information will also be included in the Infant Induction meeting each year.

**The school will co-operate with St. Brigid's Parents Association** in providing for information sessions for parents on bullying and on the school's Anti-Bullying Policy.

**Parents contribute to and support** the school's policy on bullying by encouraging positive behaviour both at home and at school, by being vigilant for the signs and symptoms of bullying, and by communicating concerns to schools.

## SECTION 6 PROCEDURES FOR INVESTIGATING AND DEALING WITH BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

**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:**

- **Non-teaching staff** i.e. secretary, SNA's, caretaker & cleaners must report to the relevant teacher, any incidences of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or reported to them.
- **All reports of bullying behaviour will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher**, (normally the class teacher) with a view to establishing the facts and bringing such behaviours to an end. (Appendix 1: Restorative Practice Questions)
- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the relevant **teacher will determine whether bullying has occurred** by reference to the definition of bullying outlined in this policy. Teacher will also identify the type of bullying that has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
- **All reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant class teacher.** It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but that they are behaving responsibly.

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- **Parents 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.
- On being informed of an alleged incident of bullying, **the teacher dealing with it will first interview the alleged victim/s and discuss the feelings** which the alleged victim/s experienced because of the bullying behaviour. **An interview will then take place with the alleged perpetrator/s.** Members of a gang should be met individually and as a group.
- All **interviews will 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
- **Teachers will take a calm, unemotional problem solving approach** when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour.
- In cases where it has been **determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred the parents of the parties involved will be contacted at an early stage** to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken.
- **Sanctions** will be imposed at the discretion of the school.

## Follow up

- **Subsequent meetings** will take place to ensure that there is no repeat of bullying behaviour and in order to monitor the situation as deemed necessary.

## Recording Bullying Behaviour

- The **relevant teacher must record the bullying behaviour** in the Standardised Recording Document at Appendix 1 and a copy must be provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable) 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 ;
  - Where the school has decided as part of its anti-bullying policy that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable
- Completed Standardised Recording Documents will be kept locked away in the Principals Office.
- 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:
  - Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased
  - Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable
  - Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable
  - Feedback received from parties involved, their parents or school Principal/Deputy Principal

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## **If the school determines that bullying has not taken place:**

- If following a thorough investigation the teacher determines that bullying has not occurred, he/she will refer the issue to the Principal and/or the Deputy Principal for a second opinion.
- The Senior Management Team will make a decision as to whether bullying has taken place or not. This decision will be recorded and communicated to the parents concerned.
- Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
- In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school will advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

## **SECTION 7 ESTABLISHED INTERVENTION STRATEGIES**

**Bullying as part of a continuum of behaviour.** It is important to note that bullying behaviour can be part of a continuum of behaviour rather than a stand-alone issue. Cases arise where behaviour can escalate beyond that which can be described as bullying to serious physical or sexual assault or harassment. To ensure that such cases are dealt with appropriately this bullying policy is linked to St. Brigid's GNS Code of Behaviour. Referral will be made to National Educational Psychological Services (NEPS), Child and Adult Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and other external agencies and authorities where appropriate.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Whilst all reports of bullying will be investigated by the relevant teacher it must be stated that where incidents of bullying are occurring outside of the school environment and/or outside of school hours and/or involving persons who are not pupils in the school – the school may not be able to fully deal with these matters. In such cases the school will make all reasonable efforts to co-operate with parents in assisting them to resolve the issues. The school may also direct those involved to the appropriate support agencies ie Gardai/Community Garda Service, HSE/TULSA or other relevant community service.

### **Reporting to the Board of Management.**

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 or Deputy Principal since the previous report to the Board and
- Confirmation that all of these cases have been, or are being, dealt with in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy and these procedures.
- As part of the oversight arrangements, the Board of Management must undertake an annual review of the school's anti bullying policy and its implementation by the school. See point 12 below

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

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- The child will be praised for speaking out about the bullying situation.
- Close communication between the child's home and school will form a vital part in the child's recovery from being bullied. Class teachers are asked to keep in regular contact with the child's family to ensure that problems have not persisted.
- Children who have engaged in bullying behaviour also need support and close communication between home and school.
- The Class teacher and the support teacher will work together to ensure that the parties involved have the opportunity to communicate their feelings in school.
- The class teacher and/or the support teacher will work on rebuilding the child's (both parties) self-esteem. This may take place in a class, small group or one to one setting.
- A buddy system may be set up for the children if necessary.
- Parents of children who are bullied and parents of children who have bullied will be given a copy of our 'Tips for Parents' sheet.

## **SECTION 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.

## **SECTION 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.

## **SECTION 10: This policy was amended by the Board of Management on February 13<sup>th</sup> 2019. Annual Review of this policy carried out on Oct 23<sup>rd</sup> 2019.**

**SECTION 11:** This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the Patron if requested.

**SECTION 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. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested to the patron and the Department.

Signed: *Carmel Reid*  
(Chairperson)

Signed: *Lorna Diffley*  
(Principal)

Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2019

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## 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

Pupil concerned	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

### 4. Location of incidents

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)

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## 8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

## 9. Details of actions taken

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ (Relevant Teacher) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal \_\_\_\_\_

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## Appendix 1: RESTORATIVE PRACTICE QUESTIONS:

1. What happened?
2. What were you thinking about at the time?
3. What have your thoughts been since?
4. Who has been affected by what you did?
5. In what way have they been affected?
6. What do you think needs to happen next?
7. What could you do differently the next time?