



St. Brendan'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 **National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB)**, the **Board of Management of St. Brendan's National School** has adopted the following **Anti-Bullying Policy** as part 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**, published in **September 2013**.

Policy Statement

The Board of Management recognises the **serious nature of bullying** and the **negative impact** it can have on the lives of pupils. The school is fully committed to the following **key principles of best practice** in preventing and addressing bullying behaviour:

Key Principles of Best Practice

- **A positive school culture and climate that:**

- Welcomes difference and diversity, and promotes inclusivity.
- Encourages pupils to disclose and discuss bullying in a safe, non-threatening environment.
- Fosters respectful relationships across the school community.
- **Effective leadership** at all levels.
- **A whole-school approach** involving staff, pupils, and parents.
- **A shared understanding** of what bullying is and its impact.
- **Education and prevention strategies**, including awareness-raising measures that:
 - Build empathy, respect, and resilience in pupils.
 - Explicitly address cyberbullying and identity-based bullying, including homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- **Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils**, including:
 - Use of the **Yellow Card System** to reduce rough play in the yard.
 - Increased active supervision during break times.
- **Support for staff**, including:
 - Use of an **Incident Book** for recording and tracking incidents.
 - **Bí Cinéalta** training.
 - Staff, parent, and pupil questionnaires to evaluate anti-bullying efforts.
- **Consistent recording, investigation, and follow-up** of bullying behaviour, using established intervention strategies.
- **Strong implementation of SPHE programmes**, including:

- *Be Safe, Walk Tall, Lust for Life*, and the *Zeeko Anti-Cyberbullying Programme*.
- Visits from the **Community Garda** to support awareness and prevention.
- **Ongoing evaluation** of the effectiveness of this policy, including the implementation of the new **Bí Cinéalta** policy.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is defined as **unwanted negative behaviour**, verbal, psychological, or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is **repeated over time**.

Examples of Bullying Behaviour

1. Physical Bullying:

- Hitting, kicking, pushing, tripping.
- Interfering with another pupil's belongings or damaging property.

2. Verbal Bullying:

- Name-calling, teasing, taunting.
- Spreading rumours or making threats.

3. Social/Relational Bullying:

- Excluding someone from a group or activity.
- Deliberately isolating or ignoring a pupil.
- Using peer pressure to manipulate or control others.

4. Cyberbullying:

- Sending hurtful or threatening messages online or via text.
- Sharing embarrassing photos or videos without consent.
- Creating fake profiles to mock or harass someone.

5. Identity-Based Bullying:

- Targeting someone based on race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, or disability.
- Homophobic, transphobic, racist, or sexist remarks or actions.
- 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)
- The class teacher in the first instance, the principal Niall Mulvey and any other member of the staff who have been directly or indirectly aware of the circumstances surrounding the issues that will assist in the investigation of the bullying issues. Use of the incident book is essential to record all details of the issue.
- **Whole-School Anti-Bullying Initiatives**
- To promote a culture of kindness, respect, and inclusion, the following strategies and programmes are implemented throughout the school:
- **Visual Reinforcement:**
 - Anti-Bullying Code and posters displayed in classrooms and corridors.
 - Student-created artwork and poster competitions.
 - Cyberbullying awareness posters.
- **Playground and Yard Supervision:**
 - Clearly defined yard rules.
 - Yellow Card System to reduce rough play.

- Active supervision by staff.
- **Curricular and Co-Curricular Activities:**
 - **SPHE Programmes:** *Stay Safe, Walk Tall, RSE, Lust for Life.*
 - **Drama and Role Play:** Used to explore empathy and conflict resolution.
 - **Circle Time:** Encourages open discussion and peer support.
 - **Co-operative Games:** Promote teamwork and inclusion.
 - **Debating and Project Work:** Build confidence and communication skills.
 - **Sports Programme:** Encourages positive peer interaction.
- **Targeted Resources and Programmes:**
 - Lust for Life from Junior-6th
 - **Zeeko Cyberbullying Programme.**
- **Clubs and Initiatives:**
 - **Buddy Club:** Supports social development and peer mentoring.
 - **Chess Club:** Encourages inclusive, interest-based engagement.
 - **Doodle club:** Encourages creativity
 - **The Art Council,** with the student council, promotes messages like school mottos, anti-bullying messages and messages about what is going on in the school.

- **6. Procedures for Investigating and Recording Bullying Behaviour**

- In line with Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*, the following steps are taken when investigating bullying:
 - ***Investigation Process***

 - The **Principal or Class Teacher** will:
 - Establish the facts: *What happened? Where? Who was involved? Why?*
 - Speak to the **injured party**, the **accused**, and **independent witnesses** (if available).
 - Record all details in the **Bullying Record Book** (classroom or yard).

 - ***Follow-Up Actions***

 - If bullying is confirmed:
 - The pupil will be informed that their behaviour breaches the **Code of Behaviour**.
 - The **Principal** will be notified in cases of serious or repeated bullying.
 - **Parents of both parties** will be contacted, and actions taken will be explained.
 - Support strategies will be discussed with parents to reinforce school actions at home.

- ***Referral to Principal***

- Cases will be referred to the Principal when:
- Bullying is **persistent**.
- A **serious incident** occurs.
- **Parents raise concerns**.
- A child appears **distressed** or shows a **change in behaviour**.

- ***Parental Communication***

- Parents will be informed:
- When a teacher has concerns.
- When a child may need protection outside school hours.
- When a child appears emotionally affected.

- **7. Support Programmes for Victims and Pupils Who Bully**

- ***For Pupils Who Bully:***

- Ongoing support to address behaviour and build empathy.
- Opportunities to develop **self-awareness** and **positive social skills**.

- ***For Victims of Bullying:***

- Confidence-building activities.

- Opportunities to enhance **self-esteem** and **resilience**.
- ***Whole-School Reinforcement:***
- The **Anti-Bullying Code** is revisited regularly in classrooms and at assemblies.
- Positive behaviour is acknowledged and celebrated.
- **Referral to External Agencies**
- In some cases, it may be necessary to refer a pupil (victim or perpetrator) to external support services. If a parent or teacher is concerned, they should speak to the **Principal**, who will advise on available support
- **Procedure for Parents Concerned About Bullying**
- **Approach the Class Teacher** to discuss concerns.
- If unresolved, **speak to the Principal**.
- If still unresolved, **contact the Chairperson of the Board of Management (B.O.M.)**.
- As a final step, **submit a written complaint** to the B.O.M. for formal review.