

St. Joseph's National School Moneygall 17003A 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. Joseph's National School, Moneygall 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.

Here at St. Joseph's National School we believe that our pupils have the right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment. All institutions, whether large or small, contain some individuals who have the potential for bullying behaviour.

Our Mission Statement includes our aims to enhance pupils self-esteem and the development of personal responsibility. In our school, it is made clear that bullying is a form of anti-social behaviour. It is always wrong and will not be tolerated.

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) 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.
- (b) Effective leadership**
- (c) A school-wide approach**
- (d) A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact**
- (e) Implementation of education and prevention strategies** (including awareness raising measures) that build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils, explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- (f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils**
- (g) Supports for staff**
- (h) Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and**
- (i) On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.**

Key elements of a positive school culture

- The school acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment.
- The school acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual and his/her worth as a human being.
- The school promotes positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among all its members.
- The school prohibits vulgar, offensive, sectarian or other aggressive behaviour or language by any of its members.

- The school has a clear commitment to promoting equity in general and gender equity in particular in all aspects of its functioning.
- The school has the capacity to change in response to pupils' needs.
- The school identifies aspects of curriculum through which positive and lasting influences can be exerted towards forming pupils' attitudes and values.
- The school takes particular care of "at risk" pupils and uses its monitoring systems to facilitate early intervention where necessary and it responds to the needs, fears or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner.
- The school recognises the need to work in partnership with and keep parents informed on procedures to improve relationships on a school-wide basis.
- The school recognises the role of parents in equipping the pupil with a range of life-skills.
- The school recognises the role of other community agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying.
- The school promotes habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the interdependence of people in groups and communities.
- The school promotes qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among all its members both in school and out of school.
- Staff members share a collegiate responsibility, under the direction of the Principal, to act in preventing bullying/aggressive behaviour by any member of the school community.

Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate

The following are some practical tips for immediate actions that can be taken to help build a positive school culture and climate and to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour.

- 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. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.
- 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 are absent.
- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.
- 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.
- All staff can actively watch 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.
 - Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas, changing rooms, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision.
 - Hot times again tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when pupils are in the playground/school yard or moving classrooms.
- Support the establishment and work of student councils.

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. Bullying behaviour is intentional and deliberate.

(See Appendix 1 for examples of bullying behaviours.)

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.

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.

Relevant Teachers

The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying in St Joseph's Primary School are class teachers, support teachers, Deputy Principal and Principal. Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

Rights and Responsibilities

In the daily life and routines of the school the ways in which people interact with each other significantly affect each person's sense of self-worth, belonging and well-being. The fostering of good quality interpersonal relationships among teachers, students, parents and ancillary staff is a responsibility shared by everyone.

All members of the school community have a role to play in the prevention of bullying.

Responsibilities of the Board of Management

The Board of Management is responsible for ensuring that all members of the school community are enabled to deal effectively with bullying. The Board is committed to providing time and resources for the implementation of the policy. The Board will ensure that proper supervisory and monitoring measures are in place to prevent bullying and to deal with incidents appropriately as they arise.

Responsibilities of School Staff

- To acknowledge that bullying is a shared responsibility within the school.
- To implement prevention and intervention strategies which build and maintain safe learning environment for the whole school community.
- To empower students to deal with conflict in constructive ways.
- To take all reports of bullying seriously and to report them to the Principal if warranted.
- To document any serious bullying incidents using the Bullying Incident Report Form.

Responsibilities of Pupils

- To show consideration, respect and support towards others.
- To be able to identify bullying behaviour.
- To not bully others.
- To tell if they are being bullied or if they see someone else being bullied.
- To engage in responsible reporting when witnessing or experiencing bullying behaviour.
- To develop a sense of empathy for targeted members of the school community and as a result take safe and sensible action as a bystander.

Responsibilities of Parents

- To support the school in the implementation of the policy.
- To watch out for signs that their child may be being bullied.
- To speak to the class teacher if their child is being bullied or they suspect that this is happening.
- To speak to the class teacher as soon as they are aware that issues are arising which are affecting their child.
- To instruct their children to tell if they are being bullied or if they have seen other pupils being bullied.
- To notify the school if they think that their child is displaying bullying behaviour and to work with the school in addressing this problem. They should not defer letting the school know of any issue, in the hope that the problem will go away.
- To ensure that if their children are online that they are using social media in a safe and responsible manner; parental supervision is very important in this area as there are risks associated with internet/website access.
- To never directly approach a student, or the parent of a student, at the school to intervene in behavioural issues.

Strategies

The education and prevention strategies that are used by our school include:

School-wide approach

- A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community; adults should model the type of behaviours they promote to pupils.
- 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 are 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; the topic of bullying is addressed at each staff meeting.
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, including pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community (eg: talks for parents/pupils on Stay Safe, Internet Safety/cyberbullying). At least five awareness-raising exercises per school year for each class

Term 1: Anti-bullying Poster Competition

Term 2: Friendship/Kindness Day

Term 3: Anti-Cyber Safety Day

Term 4: House Points Initiative

Other: Visit and talks from the local community Garda

- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff are encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision also applies to monitoring pupils' use of communication technology within the school. (See Supervision Policy and AUP).

The school playground will be divided into two supervision zones:

Zone 1: Junior Infants to Second Class

Zone 2: Third class to Sixth Class. Everyone is welcome to play on the yard if not partaking in football game on the field.

- Buddy system 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-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) are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school upon entry. It is also available from the office.
- The implementation of regular whole school awareness measures, including posters, competitions, group assemblies etc.
- Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way pupils 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 in with homework.

*Anonymous questionnaire in each classroom at Halloween and Easter

*Worry box for older children.

*Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.

*Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place. All teachers will teach children to recognise bullying behaviour and encourage them to use their voice to say 'no' to such behaviour.

- Identify clear protocols to encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied.
- Ensuring that children and parents accept the Acceptable Use Policy of the school.

Implementation of curricula

- The implementation of the SPHE curriculum, according to our school plan, including the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes, e.g. Stay Safe Programme and The Walk Tall Programme (integrated); cyberbullying (Webwise teachers' resources)
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes at primary level. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardai (when available) cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying.
- The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SET pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.

Links to other policies

Please refer to the school's policy documents on Code of Behaviour (including mobile phone policy) Child Protection Policy, Supervision of pupils, Acceptable Use Policy, and Attendance (all available from the office).

Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

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 detailed below. 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

- Pupils are encouraged to report bullying behaviour as soon as possible.
- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to the attention of any teacher in the school.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretaker, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

Investigating and dealing with incidents

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the (relevant) teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
- 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.
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.
- Where possible incidents should be investigated outside the classroom 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 questions of *what, where, when, who and why*. This should be done in a calm manner, setting

an example in dealing effectively with conflict in a non-aggressive manner. Teachers who are investigating bullying behaviour should keep a written record of their discussions with those involved.

- 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 is school policy to request the assistance of another staff member in such investigations.
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after the interview by the teacher;
- It may also be helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s) (if appropriate).
- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been 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 to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
- 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 will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy). The school will give parent(s)/guardian(s) 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 parent(s)/guardian(s)) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school.

The following steps are taken in dealing with bullying behaviour:

- In St Joseph's we try to enable those involved to engage in a mediated conversation, the purpose of which is to allow for the victim to have a voice and the perpetrator to understand the consequences of their actions. All staff will be made aware of the importance of this practice.
- A verbal warning is given to the perpetrator to stop the offending behaviour. This is done in the presence of the perpetrator's parent(s), the Principal and another teacher. The perpetrator is requested to apologise to the victim in the presence of the Principal and another teacher and to give an assurance that the offending behaviour will stop.
- There may be loss of specific privileges which may include the following: exclusion from break/lunchtime play for a specific number of days; parents may be requested to escort their child to and from school.
- If bullying reoccurs, it may be deemed necessary to have the perpetrator sign a contract of agreement to stop the bullying behaviour. This would also be signed by the parent(s). The contract will be monitored regularly by the Principal with the assistance of the class teacher and another member of staff to see that the situation is resolved.
- If after the above, the bullying behaviour reoccurs a formal meeting of the perpetrator, his/her parents /guardians, the Principal and Chairperson of the Board of Management will be held and a formal suspension may occur. The Chairperson has the authority to enact an immediate suspension. Alternatively, in certain circumstances he/she may issue a final Chairperson's warning to the perpetrator.
- **While the school supports parents and pupils in dealing with issues that arise outside of school, parents should be aware that the school is limited in its power to deal fully with issues that arise while the children are not under our care.**

Follow up and recording

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:

- (a) Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
 - (b) Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
 - (c) Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable;
 - (d) Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardian(s) or the school Principal or Deputy Principal
- 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.
 - Where a parent(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
 - In the event that a parent(s)/guardian(s) has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school will advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Recording of bullying behaviour

It is important that all recording of bullying incidents is done in an objective and factual manner. This school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

Informal- pre-determination that bullying has occurred

- All staff keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. We use record sheets for use of teacher on the playground. The Principal also has a book for reporting of incidents other than those recorded in the playground book. All incidents should be reported to the relevant teacher.
- While 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.

Formal Stage 1-determination that bullying has occurred

- 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.
- The school has decided that, at the end of each school year, any written records pertaining to a class will be passed on to the next class teacher with the children's files.

Formal Stage 2-known as Appendix 3 (From DES Procedures)

- The relevant teacher must use the recording template known **Appendix 3** to record the bullying behaviour. It will be used only 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; and
 - b) 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.

When the recording template is completed, it will be retained in the Principal's office.

Cyber Bullying

Here in St Joseph's National School it is our policy to inform the Gardaí in cases where we are made aware of Cyber Bullying.

Please see accompanying policy.

Reporting Serious Cases of Bullying

- In cases where a school has serious concerns in relation to managing the behaviour of a pupil, the advice of the National Education Psychological Service (NEPS) should be sought.
- In relation to bullying in schools, *Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011* (Children First) and the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* provide that 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".
- Serious instances of bullying behaviour should, in accordance with the Children First and *the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*, be referred to the HSE Children and Family Services and/or Gardaí as appropriate.
- The *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* also provide that where school personnel have concerns about a child but are not sure whether to report the matter to the HSE, the Designated Liaison Person must seek advice from the HSE Children and Family Social Services.

Established intervention strategies

- Teacher conversations with pupils.
- Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process.
- Working with parent(s)/guardian(s) to support school interventions
- Circle Time and similar strategies in order to address issues.
- Anti-bullying programme and awareness-raising throughout the school year.

Support

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

- All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience e.g.
 - (a) Pastoral care system
 - (b) Buddy system
 - (c) Care team
 - (d) Group work such as Circle Time
- If pupils require counselling or further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be either for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.
- Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

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.

See Supervision Policy.

See Acceptable Use Policy.

See Mobile Phone Policy, included in Code of Behaviour.

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 members of the school community 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 was adopted by the Board of Management on _____.

This policy has been made available to school personnel, is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request and provided to the Parents' Association. 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, be readily accessible to parents and pupils on request 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: _____ (Chairperson B.O.M)

Signed: _____ (Principal)

Ratification

It was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management on 30 March 2023.

Signed: _____ Chairperson, Board of Management.

Signed: _____ Principal

Appendix 1: Examples of bullying behaviours

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
- Slagging
- 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/ Twitter/YouTube/Snapchat/Instagram 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).

- Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation
- Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation

Homophobic and Transgender

- Name calling used in a derogatory manner
- Physical intimidation, attacks or 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

This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:

Relational

- 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
- Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching
- Harassment

Sexual

- 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

Special Educational Needs, Disability

- 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

Types of Bullying

The following are some of the types of bullying behaviour that can occur amongst pupils:

- **Physical aggression:** This behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While pupils often engage in ‘mess fights’, they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.
- **Intimidation:** Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation: it may be based on the use of very aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon. Particularly upsetting can be a facial expression which conveys aggression and/or dislike.
- **Isolation/exclusion and other relational bullying:** This occurs where a certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or all of the class group. This practice is usually initiated by the person engaged in bullying behaviour and can be difficult to detect. It

may be accompanied by writing insulting remarks about the pupil in public places, by passing around notes about or drawings of the pupil or by whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard. Relational bullying occurs when a person's attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. One of the most common forms includes control: "Do this or I won't be your friend anymore"(implied or stated); a group ganging up against one person (girl or boy); non-verbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumours about a person or giving them the "silent treatment".

- **Cyber-bullying:** This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, e-mail, instant messaging (IM), apps, gaming sites, chat-rooms and other online technologies. Being the target of inappropriate or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying. As cyber-bullying uses technology to perpetrate bullying behaviour and does not require face to face contact, cyber-bullying can occur at any time (day or night). Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyber-bullying. For example, a target may be sent homophobic text messages or pictures may be posted with negative comments about a person's sexuality, appearance etc.
- **Name calling:** Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) which hurts, insults or humiliates should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name-calling of this type refers to physical appearance, e.g., size or clothes worn. Accent or distinctive voice characteristics may attract negative attention. Academic ability can also provoke name calling. This tends to operate at two extremes. There are those who are singled out for attention because they are perceived to be weak academically. At the other extreme there are those who, because they are perceived as high achievers, are also targeted.
- **Damage to property:** Personal property can be the focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, school books and other learning material or interference with a pupil's locker or bicycle. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.
- **Extortion:** Demands for money may be made, often accompanied by threats (sometimes carried out in the event of the targeted pupil not delivering on the demand). A pupil may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to another who is engaged in bullying behaviour.

Appendix 2: IMPACT AND INDICATORS OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

Impacts of bullying behaviour

- Pupils who are being bullied may develop feelings of insecurity, humiliation and extreme anxiety and thus may become more vulnerable. Self-confidence may be damaged with a consequent lowering of self-esteem. While they may not talk about what is happening to them, their suffering is indicated through changes in mood and behaviour. Extreme cases of bullying may result in suicide. It is, therefore, essential to be alert to changes in behaviour as early intervention can be very effective.
- Pupils who witness bullying may also be affected and may suffer in similar ways to those who are bullied. For example, pupils who witness identity-based bullying and share that identity can experience anxiety and feel under threat themselves. Pupils can also feel guilt or distress at not being able to help the person being bullied.

- There are also consequences for individuals who engage in bullying behaviour. Pupils who become involved in such behaviour can be at higher risk of depression. Other possible long-term consequences may include an increased risk of developing an anti-social personality, anxiety disorders, a likelihood of substance abuse and law-breaking behaviour in adulthood and decreased educational and occupational attainment.

Indicators of bullying behaviour

- The following signs and symptoms may suggest that a pupil is being bullied:
 - (i) Anxiety about travelling to and from school e.g. requesting parents to drive or collect him/her, changing travel routes, avoiding regular times for travelling to and from school;
 - (ii) Unwillingness to go to school, refusal to attend, truancy;
 - (iii) Deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school;
 - (iv) Pattern of physical illnesses e.g. headaches, stomach aches;
 - (v) Unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour which may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or more especially after longer school holidays;
 - (vi) Visible signs of anxiety or distress e.g. stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, bedwetting;
 - (vii) Spontaneous out-of-character comments about either pupils or teachers;
 - (viii) Possessions missing or damaged;
 - (ix) Increased requests for money or stealing money;
 - (x) Unexplained bruising or cuts or damaged clothing; and
 - (xi) Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling him/her.
 - There may be other signs depending on the individual and his/her circumstances. The above signs do not necessarily mean that a pupil is being bullied but if repeated or occurring in combination, these signs do warrant investigation in order to establish what is affecting the pupil

CHARACTERISTICS ASSOCIATED WITH BULLYING

It is important to recognise that any pupil can be bullied or can engage in bullying behaviour.

The pupil who engages in bullying behaviour

- A significant proportion of bullying is not merely behavioural but is rooted in a lack of respect for diversity and in social inequalities. “Prejudice-based” or “identity-based” bullying can be a significant factor in bullying behaviour.
- Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour tend to display aggressive attitudes combined with a low level of self-discipline. They may lack any sense of remorse convincing themselves that the other person deserves the treatment they are receiving.
- Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour can be attention seeking: setting out to impress bystanders and responding to the reaction their behaviour provokes. They can lack the ability to empathise. They can appear unaware or indifferent to the other person’s feelings. It is of note that pupils who exhibit bullying behaviour often suffer from a lack of confidence and have low self-esteem.
- However, it must also be recognised that pupils who engage in bullying behaviour do not always intend to bully or may not recognise the potential negative impact of their words and actions on others.
- It is not uncommon to find that pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may also have been bullied themselves.

The pupil who is bullied

- Any pupil through no fault of their own may be a target of bullying. It is common in the course of normal interaction for pupils to tease or taunt each other. However, at a certain point, teasing and taunting may become forms of bullying behaviour. As pupils can be particularly quick to notice differences in others, pupils who are perceived as different in some way can be more prone to encounter such behaviour. However, the pupils who are most at risk of being bullied are those who react in a vulnerable and distressed manner. The seriousness and duration of the bullying behaviour can be related to the pupil's continuing response to the verbal, physical or psychological aggression.
- Pupils who are bullied often experience difficulties in speaking up about bullying. The difficulties include:

- (i) Fear of reprisals;
- (ii) Concerns about being perceived as a "tell-tale" for reporting bullying;
- (iii) Concerns about "getting into trouble" with the principal or teacher for reporting bullying;
- (iv) Not having evidence to back up a bullying allegation;
- (v) Not knowing how the matter will be dealt with by the school; and
- (vi) Not feeling fully confident of being believed.

More vulnerable pupils

- While bullying can happen to any pupil, it is known that some may be more vulnerable to or at risk of experiencing bullying. Such vulnerable groups include pupils with disabilities or special educational needs, those from ethnic minority and migrant groups, pupils from the Traveller community, lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) pupils and those perceived to be LGBT and pupils of minority religious faiths.
- There can be an increased vulnerability to bullying amongst pupils with special educational needs and particularly those who do not understand social cues and/or have difficulty communicating. Some pupils with complex needs may lack understanding of social situations and therefore trust everyone implicitly. Such pupils may be more vulnerable because they do not have the same social skills or capacity as others to recognise and defend themselves against bullying behaviour. Research suggests that children with disabilities and with special educational needs (SEN) are more likely to be bullied than others. Bullying can also have a more severe impact on such children. For example, some studies which compare the impact of bullying on children with and without certain disabilities, such as a speech and language difficulty, show that bullying has a greater impact on self-esteem for those with a disability.
- Homophobic and transphobic bullying (bullying targeted at those who are or who are perceived to be LGBT) has also been found to be prevalent with evidence that such pupils have particular difficulty in speaking up or reporting the bullying behaviour.

Where does bullying happen?

Bullying can happen anywhere at any time but there are certain times and places which particularly facilitate bullying.

- **Cyber-bullying:** Access to technology means that cyber-bullying can happen around the clock and the pupil's home may not even be a safe haven from such bullying. Pupils are increasingly communicating in ways that are often unknown to adults and free from supervision. The nature of these technologies means digital content can be shared and seen by a very wide audience almost instantly and is almost impossible to delete permanently. While cyber bullying often takes place at home and at night, the impact can also be felt in school.
- **Areas of unstructured activity:** Bullying in schools frequently takes place in the playground/schoolyard. School grounds with hidden or obscured parts may provide an environment conducive to bullying. Many common playground/schoolyard games present

opportunities for bullying because of their physical nature. It is relatively easy to single out and bully another pupil. The noise level masks much of what is going on. The playground/schoolyard provides the opportunity for older pupils to pick on younger pupils. It can also be the setting for bullying by groups. Continuing provocation may eventually lead to a physical fight and ironically in some cases the person being bullied may appear to be the aggressor because he/she finally gives vent to his/her frustration. Toilets, corridors, cloakrooms, locker areas, changing rooms, showers, the gym and assembly hall may be the scene of verbal, psychological and physical bullying. The behaviour of pupils in those areas needs careful monitoring.

- **Bullying in the classroom:** Bullying may also take place in class. It may occur subtly through glances, looks and sniggers but may take the more overt form of physical intimidation. It may also be exacerbated if a classroom atmosphere prevails whereby pupils are allowed to make derogatory comments about their classmates or other teachers. However, teachers need to be alert to the underlying reasons for such comments in case pupils are trying to disclose something which is disturbing them and thus needs further investigation. Bullying may also occur between class periods irrespective of whether the class or the teacher moves.
- **Coming to and from school:** The area immediately outside the school, the local shops and local neighbourhood are often the scenes of bullying. Bullying can also take place at the bus-stop or on the journey to and from school whether the individuals are walking, cycling or on school buses.