

ST OLIVER POST PRIMARY SCHOOL  
OLDCASTLE, CO MEATH



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

April 2024

## Contents

<b>1. CONTEXT .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>2. BOARD OF MANAGEMENT.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3. DEFINITION OF BULLYING.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4. INVESTIGATING AND DEALING WITH BULLYING .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>5. EDUCATION AND PREVENTION STRATEGIES.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>6. SCHOOL PROCEDURES .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>7. SCHOOL SUPPORTS.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>8. SUPERVISION AND MONITORING OF PUPILS.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>9. PREVENTION OF HARASSMENT .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>10. DATE OF ADOPTION.....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>11. POLICY AVAILABILITY .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>12. POLICY REVIEW .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>BOM &amp; LMETB RATIFICATION PROCESS FOR THE ANTI-BULLYING POLICY .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>APPENDICES.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>TEMPLATE FOR RECORDING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>CHECKLIST FOR ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE ANTI-BULLYING POLICY AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>NOTIFICATION REGARDING THE BOM’S ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE ANTI-BULLYING POLICY.....</b>	<b>13</b>

## 1. Context

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 Oliver Post Primary school has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* which were published in September 2013.

St Oliver Post Primary School's ethos and mission statement recognises the dignity and uniqueness of each member of its school community - student, teacher, parent and ancillary staff. It acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment. In accordance with our ethos we will continue to promote responsibility, respect, tolerance, dignity and understanding.

## 2. Board of Management

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;
- 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); and
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

The policy seeks to address bullying behaviour and harassment. It applies to all members of the school community (pupils and staff). The policy shall be applicable during:

- School time (including break and lunch times);
- Going to and from school;
- School tours and trips;
- Extra-curricular activities;
- Examinations;
- Any occasion when the student is in uniform; and
- The school may also apply the policy to student's online activity in cases of inappropriate use.

### 3. Definition of Bullying

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.

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*.

### 4. Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

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*):

#### **Reporting Bullying**

- All incidents of suspected bullying must be reported to the relevant tutor, Year head and/or Deputy Principal and/or Principal.
- Students (both victims and witnesses) should discuss any incident of bullying with a teacher; this is responsible behaviour and promotes the open culture of communication within the school.
- Parents/guardians should contact the Tutor / Year Head regarding suspected incidents of bullying behaviour that have come to their attention through their children, relatives, friends of their children or other parents.
- All staff members must always be vigilant and report incidents of suspected bullying.
- School policies and procedures are designed to help promote an atmosphere of mutual respect and acceptance of others.

## 5. Education and Prevention Strategies

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 the school are as follows (see Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

### General

- Peer Mentor System;
- Prefects assigned to First Years;
- Publishing and Publicising an Anti-Bullying Policy;
- The Anti-Bullying Policy will be included in the school journal; the School Plan; the school website; and discussed as part of our Wellbeing Programme;
- Term Assemblies are used to promote our Anti-Bullying Policy and positive self-worth in accordance with our ethos (promote responsibility, respect, tolerance, dignity and understanding);
- Positive Discipline System;
- Good supervision and monitoring systems also facilitate early intervention;
- Students are supervised in the corridors and also at lunch times by staff. Supervision of play times and lunch breaks is organised on a rota basis. Each teacher has a responsibility to actively supervise their designated area during their allocated time slot;
- The students' internet sessions are supervised by a teacher (Refer to Acceptable Usage policy);
- Wellbeing Week;
- Friendship Week for First Years;
- First Year Induction and Post Induction;
- Our school's SEN and Anti-bullying policy work hand in hand to prevent bullying of vulnerable children with special educational needs;
- Guest Speakers;
- Posters and displays in classrooms and around the school highlighting bullying / anti-bullying issues; and
- Vigilance of non - teaching staff.

### Inclusion in the Curriculum

- As part of our Wellbeing programme at Junior Cycle and SPHE/RSE at Senior Cycle, students are provided with opportunities to discuss appropriate behaviour.
- All subject teachers should strive to promote respect, harmony and tolerance in their class rooms. "There is space within the teaching of all subjects to foster an attitude of respect for all: to promote the value of diversity; to address prejudice and stereotyping and to highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour".
- In English, there is a wide range of literature available which could be used to stimulate discussion.
- In Civil, Social and Political Education (CSPE), the interdependence of people in communities at local, national and international levels is stressed.

- In Geography and History references to colonisation, exploitation and dictatorships could be used to illustrate the negative aspect of power.
- The work could be extended into many other areas such as Art, Drama, Religious Education, and Physical Education. Co-operation and group enterprise can be promoted through team sports, school clubs and societies as well as through practical subjects. Sporting activities in particular can provide excellent opportunities for channelling and learning how to control aggression.

## 6. School Procedures

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 for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

### School Investigation

- It is important that schools identify and consistently implement established evidence-based intervention strategies for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour and preventing its continuation.
- The primary aim for the relevant teacher (usually the Year Head) 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 assign blame).
- Therefore incidents of bullying behaviour, no matter how trivial, which are drawn to the attention of the school, needs to be dealt with in the manner described below. In this way pupils will gain confidence in the open culture of communication in the school. 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, and are helping the school community as a whole.**
- Appropriate personnel will speak and listen to all of the students involved in a bullying incident. (Year head and/or deputy principal and/or principal).
- 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 of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
  - In situations where students have reported incidents of bullying, discretion is to be used in as far as possible when investigating the incident.
  - 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;
  - 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.

- 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 a conflict in a non-aggressive manner;
- If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Those involved may be invited to write down their account of the incident(s);
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher;
- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved may 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 can give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils (in the event that it is a minor first time offence parents might not be contacted).
- 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 code of behaviour. Efforts should be made to try to 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, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school;
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved may 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. This can have a therapeutic effect;
- Victims and perpetrators may also be encouraged to engage with the school councillor.
- In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be reported to the Deputy Principal by the relevant teacher.
- 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; and
  - 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 these procedures, the parents should contact the school principal to discuss;

## 7. School Supports

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*) :

### Sanctions / Support

- Where the incident is deemed to be minor, a verbal warning will be given to the bully to stop the inappropriate behaviour, pointing out how he/she is in breach of the Code of Behaviour and trying to get him/her to see the situation from the victim's point of view. If deemed appropriate, parents may be contacted.
- If the incident is deemed to be serious, appropriate sanctions may be imposed in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.
- If there is serious incident, perhaps repeated verbal assault or coercion, the matter should be reported to the Deputy or Principal, parents will be involved and appropriate investigations conducted.
- Incidents of cyberbullying:
- St. Oliver Post Primary School has a duty of care to all its pupils. As such if there are reported incidents of cyber bullying involving students of this school, School Management shall investigate the incident where possible and disciplinary sanctions may be taken.
- The school also reserves the right to report any such bullying activity to the proper authorities.
- Where the incident is deemed to be more serious (e.g. gross misbehaviour or physical assault), the Principal should be informed immediately and they will inform the Board of Management, if necessary.
- Offenders and victims of bullying may be referred to Counselling/Guidance.
- Where sanctions are deemed appropriate, they may include: (in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour)
  - A contract of good behaviour
  - School community service
  - Withdrawal of privileges such as representing the school in extra-curricular activities, participation in trips etc
  - Other sanctions as may be deemed appropriate e.g. Detention
  - Suspension
    - In the event, that this sanction is imposed. The right to appeal exists as detailed in our Code of Behaviour.
  - Expulsion.
    - In the event, that this sanction is imposed. The right to appeal exists as detailed in our Code of Behaviour.

## 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.



## **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.

## **10. Date of Adoption**

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2024.

## **11. Policy Availability**

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.

## **12. Policy Review**

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.

## BOM & LMETB Ratification Process for the Anti-bullying Policy

### **BOM Ratification**

<i><b>Date Ratified by the Board of Management:</b></i>	<i><b>17<sup>th</sup> April 2024</b></i>
<i><b>Proposed By:</b></i>	
<i><b>Seconded By:</b></i>	
<i><b>Signed:</b></i>	<i><b>(Chairperson, BOM)</b></i>  <i><b>(Principal)</b></i>
<i><b>Scheduled Date for Review of the Policy:</b></i>	<i><b>September 2024</b></i>

### **LMETB Ratification/Resolution of the ETB Board**

<i><b>Date of Resolution of ETB Board</b></i>	
<i><b>Signed</b></i>	<i><b>(Chairperson)</b></i>

Appendices

## 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.

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

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

	Yes /No
Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools</i> ?	
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	
Is the Board satisfied that school staff are sufficiently familiar with the policy and procedures to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy and procedures in their day to day work?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	
Has the Board discussed how well the school is handling all reports of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and not therefore included in the Principal's periodic report to the Board?	
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	
Has the data available from cases reported to the Principal (by the bullying recording template) been analysed to identify any issues, trends or patterns in bullying behaviour?	
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal

Date \_\_\_\_\_

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

To: \_\_\_\_\_

The Board of Management of \_\_\_\_\_ wishes to inform you that:

- The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of \_\_\_\_\_ [date].
- This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in **Appendix 4** of the Department's *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal

Date \_\_\_\_\_