ST. ANNE'S SECONDARY SCHOOL ANTI BULLYING POLICY

February 2024

St. Anne's Secondary School
Anti-Bullying Policy

Mission Statement:

The management and teaching staff of St. Anne's Secondary School, in co-operation with the parents are committed to the provision of a broadly based education to the girls of the region, and to achieving a balance between the academic, social, cultural, spiritual and physical components of that education within the tradition of the Mercy Sisters and continued by CEIST.

The core values of CEIST are:
- Promoting spiritual and human development.
- Achieving quality in teaching and learning.
- Showing respect for every person.
- Creating community.
- Being just and responsible.

School Ethos:

St. Anne's is a Voluntary Catholic Secondary School for girls. It was founded as a Mercy Secondary School and, as such, supports the religious and educational philosophy of its founder Catherine McAuley. St. Anne's now operates under the Trusteeship of CEIST (Catholic Education an Irish Schools Trust). CEIST advises and supports the school and, as a CEIST school, St. Anne's is guided by the following core values:

1. Promoting Spiritual and Human Development
2. Commitment to excellence and continually improving the Quality of Teaching and Learning
3. Showing Respect for each Individual
4. Creating a sense of Community with a special welcome for those most in need
5. Being Just and Responsible in our Relationships.

In keeping with the Mission Statement and Ethos of the school St Anne's Secondary aims to provide and safe environment for staff and students to work in.

1. SCOPE OF THE 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. Anne's Secondary 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.

The situations where relationships may be subject to this policy include the following and are not exhaustive:
- any time pupils are in school
- Going to and from school
- School tours and trips, including games and other extra-curricular activities
- All times, even outside the normal school times where the behaviour of any member of the school community adversely affects another member or members of that community

2. KEY PRINCIPLES

The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils. The Board of Management 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 to anti bullying;
- 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.

Further descriptions of St. Anne's actions to create and maintain a positive school culture can be located in Appendix 1.

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."

(Anti Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools, 2013)

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. INVESTIGATION OF AND DEALING WITH BULLYING

The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying in this school is (are) as follows:

- The Principal
- The Deputy Principal
- The Year Tutor for specific student(s) involved

- All staff of St Anne's Secondary School, have a responsibility for the prevention of and reporting of bullying in the school.

- A bullying concern should be reported to one of the following staff members using the designated template for recording bullying behaviour (see appendix 3)

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*):

- a schoolwide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community with effective modelling by staff
- the promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour
- Education and prevention strategies; School-wide approach
- The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Pupils will be 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.
- An annual audit of professional development needs with a view to assessing staff requirements through internal staff knowledge/expertise and external sources
- Professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teacher(s)
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra- curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.
- Involvement of the student council in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Buddy system, mentoring, 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-to be included in student journals and 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 (every year).
- The implementation of annual whole school awareness measures e.g., regular school or year group assemblies by principal, deputy principal and other middle management staff
- Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way pupils will 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. Ensure that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.:

    o Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
    o Hand note up with homework.
    o Make a phone call to the school or to a trusted teacher in the school.
    o Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
    o Administer a confidential questionnaire once a term to all pupils.
    o Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.

- We will identify clear protocols to encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied. The protocol shall be developed in consultation with parents.
- The development of an Acceptable Use Policy in ICT and Digital Media – including mobile phones- to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored will be undertaken
- Implementation of curricula
- The full implementation of the SPHE curriculum and the RSE and related Programmes.

6. INVESTIGATION, FOLLOW UP AND RECORDING OF 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 (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

- A pupil or parent may bring a bullying concern to any teacher in the school. Individual teachers must take appropriate measures regarding reports of bullying behaviour in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy.

Investigating Bullying

- The primary aim for the relevant teacher in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame);
- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant 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 are behaving responsibly

- Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs) the school caretaker and cleaners must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher
- Parents and pupils will be 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
- The relevant teacher should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents
- Incidents will be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
- All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should seek answers to 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. 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
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face them from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher
- It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s)
- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy). The school should 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
- 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
- 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

- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.
- In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded by the relevant teacher in the recording template at Appendix 3

- 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 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 must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Recording Bullying Behaviour

- Appendix 3 of this policy, sourced from the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*, must be used to record all reports and/or allegations of bullying by all staff in the school.
- All records will be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation.
- While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher will use his/her professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same
- 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 relevant teacher must use the recording template at Appendix 3 to record the bullying behaviour 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; and
  - to notify the bullying behaviour Principal or Deputy Principal, as applicable.
  - Appendix 3 must be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.
  - It should also be noted that the timeline for recording bullying behaviour in the recording template at Appendix 3 does not in any way preclude the relevant teacher from consulting the Principal or Deputy Principal at an earlier stage in relation to a case.

7. SUPPORT FOR PUPILS AFFECTED BY BULLYING

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*):

- A programme of support for pupils who have been bullied will be put in place.

- The programme of support will be developed to support the student in the context of the bullying that they have experienced.
- Such support could include, but is not limited to, counselling and/or opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed.

- A programme of support for those pupils involved in bullying behaviour will also form part of the school's response.

- Pupils involved in bullying behaviour need assistance on an ongoing basis. This support could include, but is not limited to, counselling or other appropriate therapies.

- In the case of students who experience bullying or those who engage in bullying behaviour, any programme of support will be developed and agreed upon through consultation with the student, their parents/guardians, the Year Tutor and Principal/Deputy Principal. Where appropriate the Learning Support Co-ordinator and/or Guidance Counsellor may also be involved. The school will seek the support of advice agencies if appropriate to do so, following consultation with parents/guardians, or the student themselves where they are aged over eighteen.

- Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour should be encouraged to discuss them with teachers.

8. SUPERVISION AND MONITORING OF PUPILS

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring practices in 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.

APPENDIX 1: BUILDING A POSITIVE SCHOOL CULTURE

Key elements of a positive school culture and climate
- 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 neatwork 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.
- The school facilitate opportunities for students and staff to deepen their understanding of bullying through talks, guest speakers and CPD.

APPENDIX 2: TYPES OF BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

The following types of bullying behaviours included are, but not exclusive to:

Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation act – e.g., sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc.

Physical Aggression: this behaviour includes pushing shoving punching kicking poking and tripping people. It may also take the form of sever physical assault. 'Mess fights' can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain

Damage to or theft of property: this behaviour includes interference, damaging/defacing, or theft of personal property. Property may include clothing, technological devices, schoolbooks, learning materials, lockers, sports equipment, school bags and personal accessories.

Verbal abuse: this behaviour includes but is not limited to the use of inappropriate (see Code of Conduct) obscene, abusive language, tone, volume of the voice directed towards another.

Name calling: Otherwise known as slagging persistent name calling directed at the same individual which hurts, insults or humiliates is regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. This includes but is not limited to reference to physical appearance, accent, distinctive voice, academic ability, dress?

Offensive graffiti/text/graphics: The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person.

Extortion: this behaviour includes demanding/pleading for money, or personal property.

Intimidation – this behaviour includes aggressive body language and or the voice being used as a weapon. This also includes aggressive facial expressions which are deliberately directed at another person.

Exclusion and isolation: this behaviour includes deliberately isolating or excluding/ignoring all or some of the class group.

Relational bullying: this occurs when a person's attempts to form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. This may include a group ganging up against one-person, nonverbal gesturing malicious gossip and spreading rumours about a person or giving them the silent treatment.

Cyberbullying – Cyber bullying behaviour is ever evolving and is carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, email, instant messaging, apps, gaming sites, chat rooms, vlogs and any other forms of cyber communication.

The use of ICT to deliberately cause upset: this behaviour may include but is not limited to. threats, intimidation, harassment or cyber-stalking by repeatedly sending unwanted texts or messages, exclusion or peer rejection, defamation, impersonation, unauthorised publication

of private information or images. In cyberbullying, bystanders can become perpetrators by passing or showing to other images designed to humiliate e.g., taking part in online polls or discussion groups. (Please refer to the anti-cyberbullying policy for more information)

Coercion: this behaviour might involve forcing a pupil to engage in any of the above behaviours

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.

APPENDIX 3: TEMPLATE FOR RECORDING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name _____ Class_____

2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

| |
| |

3. Source of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es))*

Pupil concerned	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

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

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other	

5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern

| |
| |

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)

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact
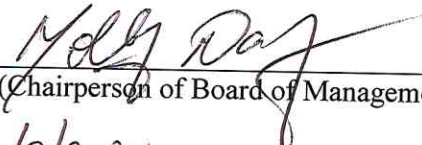
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9.   Details of actions taken

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| |

Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

10. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on **22ⁿᵈ February 2024**.

11. 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. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, be otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: _____   Signed: _____
(Chairperson of Board of Management)   (Principal)

Date: 22/2/2024   Date: 22/02/2024.

Date of next review: **February 2025**