

San Carlo Junior National School

Anti-Bullying Policy

2022

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 San Carlo Junior National 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 Board of Management recognizes the every 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

- i. Is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity
- ii. Encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment
- iii. Promotes respectful relationships across the school community

Key elements of a positive school culture and climate (*p33 D.E.S. procedures 2013*)

1. The school acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment
2. The school acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual and his/her worth as a human being
3. The school promotes positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among its members
4. The school prohibits vulgar, offensive, sectarian or other aggressive behaviour or language by any of its members
5. The school has a clear commitment to promoting equity in general and gender equity in particular in all aspects of its functioning
6. The school has the capacity to change in response to pupils' needs
7. The school identifies aspects of curriculum through which positive and lasting influences can be exerted towards forming pupils' attitudes and values
8. 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
9. The school recognises the need to work in partnership with and keep parents informed on procedures to improve relationships on a school-wide basis
10. The school recognises the role of parents in equipping the pupil with a range of life-skills
11. The school recognises the role of other community agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying
12. The school promotes habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the interdependence of people in groups and communities
13. The school promotes qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among all its members both in school and out of school
14. 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

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

- iv. Build empathy, respect and resilience
- v. Explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular homophobic and transphobic bullying
- vi. Provides for the effective supervision and monitoring of pupils

F. Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils

G. Support for staff

H. Consistent recording, investigation and follow-up of bullying behaviour(including the use of established intervention strategies)

I. On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy

In accordance with the **Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools** bullying is defined as follows:

'Bullying is the 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
- 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 schools 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 schools 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**

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 rumours, 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 can 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 or mobile phone calls**
- **Abusive**
 - Telephone/mobile phone calls
 - Text messages
 - Emails
 - Communications on social networks e.g. Facebook, Ask.fm, Twitter, YouTube or on game consoles
 - Website comments, blogs, pictures
 - 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)

Homophobic and Transgender

- Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation
- Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation
- Name calling e.g. Gay, Queer, Lesbian used in a derogatory manner
- Physical intimidation or attacks
- 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

Relational – this involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying

- Malicious gossip
- Isolation and 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 of terminology such as 'nerd' in a derogatory way

Sexual

- Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching
- Harassment

Special Needs, Educational Disability

- 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
- 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

The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:

- Principal
- Deputy Principal
- All Class Teachers
- Teachers on Yard Duty
- Any other teacher may act as the relevant teacher if the circumstances warrant it

The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows – see *Section 5 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools*

School-wide approach

- A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community
- 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 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 extracurricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to the monitoring student use of communication technology within the school
- 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 schools anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils every year. The school Code of Behaviour is available to all parent(s)/guardian(s). All parent(s)/guardian(s) are required to sign an acknowledgement that they have read and will comply with the Code of Behaviour
- The implementation of regular whole school awareness measures e.g. a dedicated notice board in the school on the promotion of friendship and bullying prevention, annual Friendship Week, parent information meetings, regular school assemblies
- 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
- The pupils will be encouraged to inform the relevant teacher of any concerns they may have using one or more of the strategies listed
 - Direct approach to teacher
 - Make a phone call to the school or to a teacher in the school
 - 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
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) are encouraged to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied. The first point of contact should be with the class teacher
- The development of an Acceptable Use Policy in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored, as is the pupils' use of mobile phones
- The supports currently being used in the school in dealing with children who are engaging in bullying behaviour or the victims of such behaviour are N.E.P.S. and the H.S.E. Family Services, where such intervention is needed

Implementation of curricula

- The full implementation of the SPHE curriculum and the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from Cool School Programme, Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programme. These lessons delivered by Community Gardaí, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying
- The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately

Links to other policies

- Other school policies, practices and activities which are particularly relevant to the schools Anti-Bullying policy are the Code of Behaviour, Child Protection Policy, Supervision of Pupils Policy, Acceptable Use Policy, Attendance Policy, Sporting Activities

The schools 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*

6.8.9. Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

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)

The schools procedures are consistent with the approach outlined in section 6.8 of the D.E.S. Anti-Bullying Procedures (2013).

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

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to 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 (SNA's), care takers, cleaners, must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher

Investigating and dealing with incidents

Style of approach (see section 6.8.9 D.E.S. Anti-Bullying Procedures)

- 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 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, who and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing 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 may face them from other members of the group after the 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 parent(s)/guardian(s) 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 the parent(s)/guardian(s) an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions taken by the school and the supports provided to the 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 schools 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 parent(s)/guardian(s) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, that this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school

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
 - Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased
 - Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable
 - Whether relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable
 - 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) must be referred, as appropriate, to the schools complaints procedures
- In the event that a parent(s)/guardian(s) has exhausted the schools complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children

Recording of bullying behaviour

It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner

The schools procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

Informal – pre-determination that bullying has occurred

- All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. Each teacher will use a **Class Behaviour Book** to record incidents. Incidents occurring in the school yard will be recorded in the **Yard Incident Book**. All incidents must 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 him/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved
- All records retained by the relevant teacher will be stored securely in the classroom

Formal Stage 2 – Appendix 3 (from D.E.S. Procedures)

The relevant teacher must use the recording template at Appendix 3 to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

- a) In cases where he/she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within twenty school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred and
- b) In circumstances where the relevant teacher, in consultation with the principal teacher, decide that the incident is sufficiently serious due to the nature of the bullying behaviour or the impact the behaviour is having on others, the bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal

When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher and a copy maintained by the principal. The completed templates will be stored securely by both the relevant teacher and the principal. These records will be available to the principal, deputy principal, relevant teacher and any other member of the teaching staff as required, subject to the approval of the principal. The relevant records, those relating to their own child/children, will also be available to parent(s)/guardian(s) of the child/children involved in any recorded incident of bullying behaviour.

These records will be maintained until the pupils reach the age of twenty one years of age after which they will be destroyed.

Established Intervention Strategies

Strategies from the list below will be used by the school in addressing incidents of bullying behaviour

- Teacher interviews with all the 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
- No blame approach
- Circle Time
- Restorative interviews
- Restorative conferencing

The schools programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows – see section 6.8.16 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools

- 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.
 - Pastoral care system
 - Buddy / Peer mentoring system
 - Group work such as Circle Time
 - NEPS advice
- If pupils require counselling or further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies i.e. N.E.P.S. and the H.S.E. to organise same. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour

Supervision and Mentoring of pupils

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate Supervision and Monitoring Policies & Practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible

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
- Membership of the Traveller Community

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on the **30.03.2022**

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and is available to parents and pupils on request and has been 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 and will be made accessible to parents, guardians and pupils on request and provided to the Parents' Association.

A record of the review and its outcome will be made available to the Department and the Patron if requested.

Signed: *Shibu Avarachan* **Date:** 30/3/22

Chairperson of the Board of Management

Signed: *Clara Lelaniff* **Date:** 30/3/22

Principal