St. Raphaela's Primary School

Anti-Bullying Policy

1. Introduction

At St. Raphaela's Primary School, we "aim to create a safe and happy learning community in which the children in our care are given every opportunity to flourish academically, spiritually and morally, in accordance with the spirit of St. Raphaela Mary." (School Mission Statement).

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 teachers. Bullying undermines our aim to create a safe and happy learning community in which children flourish, and so we as a whole school are committed to following best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the Code of Behaviour Guidelines issued by the National Education Welfare Board, the Board of Management of St. Raphaela's Primary School has adopted the following Anti-Bullying Policy within the framework of the school's overall Code of Behaviour. This policy complies fully with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*, which were published in September 2013.

St. Raphaela's Primary School is committed to maintaining a positive school culture which:

- Is welcoming of difference and diversity, and is based on inclusivity;
- Has a shared understanding of bullying and its impact;
- Is committed to building empathy, respect and resilience in our pupils;
- Explicitly addresses the issues of cyber–bullying and identity-based bullying;
- Provides effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
- Supports all members of staff;
- Is consistent in the recording, investigating and follow-up of bullying behaviour;
- Is committed to the on-going evaluation of the Anti-Bullying Policy.

2. Definition of Bullying:

In accordance with the *Anti–Bullying Procedures for 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 can be defined as repeated aggression – whether it be verbal, physical, or psychological – that is conducted by an individual or group against others. It is behaviour that is intentionally aggravating and intimidating and includes behaviours such as teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting or extortion by one or more persons against a victim.

Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, while never condoned, cannot be described as bullying. It is when behaviour is systematic and ongoing that is described as bullying. Systematic aggressive behaviour is characterised by actions that are planned and methodical and designed to undermine and intimidate the individual.

Ongoing aggressive behaviour which remains in existence develops, and is continually moving forward. With developments in modern technology children can be victims of non-contact bullying via mobile phones, the internet and other personal devices.

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 and special educational needs.

However, certain isolated incidents of intentional negative behaviour, such as the placing of a once-off offensive 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.

The following is a non-exhaustive list of examples of what we consider to be behaviours which, if carried on persistently, would be described by us as bullying:

General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying	• Physical aggression • Damage to property • Name-calling • Belittling • 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 • Invasion of personal space
Cyber	• Denigration: Spreading rumours, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation • Harassment: Continually sending mean or disturbing messages to an individual • Impersonation: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name • Silent telephone/mobile calls • Abusive messages of any type

Identity-Based Behaviours:

Homophobic	Name-calling 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 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 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 Educational Needs, 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 children's vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues Mimicking a person's disability Setting others up for ridicule

Relevant Teachers:

The relevant teachers in this school who deal with bullying are as follows:

- Principal
- Deputy Principal
- All class teachers

Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

3. Rights and Responsibilities:

In the school's daily routine life, 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 high 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 draw up Restorative Justice practices taking into account the age of the student
- To implement prevention and intervention strategies which build and maintain a safe learning environment for the whole school community
- To empower students to deal with conflict in constructive ways using Restorative Justice practices
- 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 (Appendix A).

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 use the steps that are outlined in the Stay Safe Programme and engage in responsible reporting when witnessing or experiencing bullying behaviour
- To feel empathy for targeted members of the school community and as a result take safe and sensible action as a bystander.

Responsibilities of Parents

- To understand our School Policy and our definition of bullying.
- 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 teachers as soon as they are aware that issues are arising which are affecting their child. We believe that it is always better "to nip things in the bud."
- To instruct their children to tell if they are being bullied or if they have seen other students 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 never directly approach a student, or the parent of a student, at the school to intervene in behavioural issues.

4. Strategies:

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

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 extra-curricular 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 develop an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives, and the need to respond to it – prevention and intervention.
- 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.
- 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 is available on the website.
- 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 will 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 a note up with homework.
  - ✓ The worry box.
  - ✓ Get a parent or friend to tell on your behalf.
  - ✓ Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they know or witness bullying is taking place.
- All teachers will teach children to recognise bullying behaviour and encourage them to use their voice to say 'no' to that behaviour.
- Where such behaviour persists, children will be taught to remove themselves from a situation where they feel undermined or bullied. They will do this by finding the Principal, Deputy Principal or any teacher, and asking them to deal with it for them. This is our school way of teaching children to stand up for themselves. We do not want children to retaliate themselves, we want to be made aware of situations when they arise, and from the child herself.
- 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.

5. Implementation of curricula:

As a school, we commit ourselves to:

- The full implementation of the SPHE, RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- School-wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence-based programmes e.g. the Walk Tall Programme, or the Stay Safe Programme.
- The delivery of the Garda SPHE Programme at Fifth Class to 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.

6. Procedures for noting and reporting an incident of bullying behaviour:

- Children are encouraged to report bullying behaviour, no matter how trivial it seems, as soon as possible.
- All reports of bullying, no matter how trivial, should be recorded within the class behaviour log, and be investigated by the relevant teacher(s)
- Any pupil or parent/guardian 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 the School Secretary, SNA's, caretakers or cleaners) must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

7. 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.

- When investigating and dealing with bullying the school will respond to the situation in an age-appropriate manner, bearing in mind the child's understanding of right and wrong.

- Parents/guardians of victims and bullies should be informed by the Principal or Deputy Principal following initial investigation of the incident so they are given an opportunity to discuss the matter. They are then in a position to support their child before a crisis occurs.

- Parents/guardians 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.

- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. Pupils who were not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a 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 may be helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident.

- 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 a group after the interview by the teacher.

- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parent/guardian 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/guardians an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school.

- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to her how she is in breach of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and efforts should be made to try to get her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.

- In cases where it has been determined that bullying has occurred, the Principal will meet separately with the parents/guardians of the two parties involved as appropriate, in the presence of another teacher. The Principal will outline the results of the investigation and will explain the actions being taken and the reasons for them, referring to the school policy. The following steps will be taken:

  - ✓ St. Raphaela's will utilise a restorative practise approach in its initial stages of resolving the situation. By this we mean that we will 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 her actions. All staff will be made aware of the importance of this practise.
  - ✓ A verbal warning will be given to the perpetrator to stop the offending behaviour. This will be done in the presence of the perpetrator's parents, the Principal and another teacher. The perpetrator will be 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.
  - ✓ If bullying re-occurs, a formal contract will be entered into by both parties, and the parents/guardians of both parties will be informed. 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 re-occurs, a formal meeting of the perpetrator, her parents/guardians, the Principal and the 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 or in certain circumstances may issue a final Chairperson's warning to the perpetrator.
  - ✓ It must also be clear to all involved, that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, her parents, and the school.
  - ✓ While the school will support 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 child is not under our care.

8. Follow up and recording:

- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed, the relevant teacher must 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;
  - ✓ Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents/guardians or other members of staff.
- 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/guardian is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent/guardian must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
- In the event that a parent/guardian has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent/guardian of their right to make a complaint to the Office of 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. This school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

Informal: Pre-determination that bullying has occurred:

a) All staff must keep a written record of any significant incident witnessed by them or notified to them. Each teacher will have a 'Behaviour Tracker' section in their assessment folder; this will be retained in the school office until the children have left the school.

b) 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.

c) The relevant teacher must inform the School Principal of all incidents being investigated.

Formal Stage One: 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 her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- All records will be retained in a central location by the School Principal.

Formal Stage Two: See Appendix A

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

a) in cases where she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred; and

b) Where cases of cyber bullying are reported, these will be recorded. It is our policy to inform the Gardaí in cases where we are made aware of Cyber Bullying.   When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question, and a copy maintained by the Principal. Records will be kept in the School Secretary's office and will be kept until the child has reached twenty one years.

c) *Pupils must be made to understand that any false accusation of bullying will be treated as an extremely serious issue.*

9. Established intervention strategies:

- Teacher interviews with all 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 parents/guardians to support school interventions;
- "No Blame" approach;
- Circle Time;
- Restorative interviews;
- Restorative conferencing;
- Peer mediation where suitable training has been given.

Our procedures are drawn from The Anti-Bullying Procedures document for Primary Schools, 2013, and they also refer to the intervention strategies located at: www.bullyingawarenessweek.org/pdf

10. 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.
  - ✓ Pastoral care system
  - ✓ Buddy / Peer mentoring system
  - ✓ 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 for the pupil affected by bullying or for those 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.
- Pupils who have been involved in bullying will be given the opportunity to make a new start. All pupils will be taught of the importance of allowing others to have another chance.

11. 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.
(Note that the School's Broadband Programme has blocked all social networking sites on the basis that they waste time and take up too much of the bandwidth which is being provided for educational purposes only).

12. 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.

Ratification:

This policy was created by all teachers and members of the Board of Management in consultation with parents in April 2014.

The policy was adopted and ratified by the Board of Management in April, 2014

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website, and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills, and the patron if requested.

Signed copies of all Policies are retained in the school office.

Appendix A: <u>Recording of bullying behaviour</u>

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	
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:

9. Details of actions taken:

Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher)   Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

Appendix B: Indicators which may suggest a pupil is being bullied

As a staff, we will be alert for any indication which may suggest that a child is being bullied. The following list of indicators is not exhaustive:

Physical indicators	Unexplained bruising , cuts etc Loss of, or damage to personal property Hunger or thirst Frequent minor illnesses, headaches, tummy upsets Bed wetting Loss of appetite Obsessive behaviour Expressed unhappiness with physical appearance or weight Stammering Requests for extra money Reluctance to go to the yard
Emotional and psychological behaviours	Outbursts of anger, temper or irritability at home Bullying brothers or sisters, or parents Noted behaviour changes, e.g. when a well-behaved child suddenly becomes troublesome **Signs of depression:** Changes in mood, appetite, sleep patterns Tiredness, neglect of appearance Expressions of sadness, worthlessness Nightmares, crying at night Restless or disruptive behaviour Cynicism or black mood Implied or overt threats of self-harming
School-related indicators	Reluctance to go to school or wanting to be accompanied Returning in bad form Changing route Avoiding certain days or lessons Nervousness in class Punctuality problems Poor concentration Deterioration in school work Expressions of hopelessness Reluctance to take part in activities Fewer invitations to participate in out of school activities Abusive phone calls, texts or emails.

Appendix C:

The following key elements of a positive school culture will form part of our annual review of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy:

Area of Focus	Comment
The school acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment.	
The school acknowledges and promotes 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 equality in general.	
The school has the capacity to change in response to pupils' needs.	
The school identifies aspects of the 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. It responds to the needs, fears and 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 collegial responsibility, under the direction of the Principal, to act in preventing bullying or aggressive behaviour by any member of the school community.	

Appendix D: Behaviour Tracker

Class Teacher: _____   Class Group: _____   School Year: _____

Child's Initials	Date of Behaviour	Description of Incident	Action taken (persons involved/date/parents informed)