Anti-Bullying Policy
of St. Nicholas' National School

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. Nicholas' N.S. Adare 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 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
    - Promotes respectful relationships across the school community (See Appendix A — Key Elements of a positive school culture and climate.)
- 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 issue of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including homophobic and transphobic bullying;
    - Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
    - Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils
    - Support for staff

- o Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies)
- o 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 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 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 the definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour.

Examples of bullying behaviours: (This list is non exhaustive.)

- General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying:
  - o Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc.
  - o Physical aggression
  - o Damage to property
  - o Name calling
  - o The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other material aimed at intimidating another person
  - o Offensive graffiti

- o Extortion
- o Intimidation
- o Insulting or offensive gestures
- o Invasion of personal space
- o A combination of any of the types listed.

- Cyber-bullying: Bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as;
    - o Abusive telephone/mobile calls
    - o Abusive language
    - o Text messages
    - o Abusive e-mail
    - o Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook / Instagram / Ask.fm / twitter / youtube / Snapchat or on games consoles
    - o Abusive website comments/blogs/pictures
    - o Cyber stalking — ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety
    - o Abusive posts on any form of communication technology

- **Relational**
    - o Isolation and exclusion
    - o Excluding from the group
    - o Malicious gossip
    - o Spreading rumours
    - o Ignoring

- Sexual
    - o Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching
    - o Harassment

- Homophobic and Transgender
    - o Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation
    - o Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation
    - o Name-calling
    - o Physical intimidation or attacks
    - o Threats

- **Racism**
    - o Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background
    - o Exclusion on the basis of any of the abo\ie

- **Special Educational Needs/Disability**
    - o Name calling
    - o Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs

- o Taking advantage of a pupil's vulnerability and limited capacity to recognise and defend himself/herself against bullying
- o Taking advantage of a pupil's vulnerability and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues.
- o Setting others up for ridicule.

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

- o Principal teacher
- o Deputy principal
- o All class and support teachers

The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school as are follows (see Section 6.5 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for primary and Post- Primary School):

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 teachers. School-wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parents/guardians and the wider 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 monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.
- Involvement of the pupils in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Playground Buddies, Reading Buddies and other activities that can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.

- Development and promotion of our anti-bullying code, to be displayed publicly in classrooms and common areas of the school.
1. I respect myself
2. I respect others
   3. I expect others to respect me and each other
   4. I will not tolerate disrespect

- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and parents/guardians are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school.
- The school's anti-bullying policy will be placed on the school's website.
- The implementation of regular whole-school awareness measures e.g. highlight the use of the Friendship Stop; display Playground Buddies photos in hallway; bullying prevention seminars; annual survey on bullying etc.
- Encourage a culture of telling, with the particular emphasis on bystanders. In that way, pupils will gain confidence in "telling". This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to 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:
   o Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example at break times or after school.
   o Hand note up with homework (older pupils) a Get a parent/guardian to tell on your behalf
- Administer a confidential questionnaire to pupils if there are concerns.
- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Worry box. (age appropriate)
- If parents/guardians suspect their child is being bullied they should contact one of the relevant teachers to arrange a meeting.
- The regular review of the school's Acceptable Use Policy to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored.
- The regular review of the school's Phone Policy and reminder to pupils and parents/guardians of the school's policy.

Implementation of curricula

- 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 e\/idence based programmes such as Stay Safe Programme and The Walk Tall programme.
- School wide delivery of lessons on cyber-bullying, for example Web Wise primary teachers' resource.

- Delivery of the Garda SPHE programme. These lessons are delivered by the local community Garda, when available, and cover such issues as personal safety and cyber-bullying. They are generally available to pupils in Sth and 6th classes.
- 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. Support teachers will support this measure.

Links to other policies

The following policies have particular relevance to bullying:

- Code of Behaviour
- Child protection Policy
    - Supervision of pupils
    - Acceptable Use policy
    - Phone Policy

The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying beha\/iour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:

Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bulling 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 school's procedures must be consistent with the following approach. Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parents/guardians) understand this approach from the outset.

Reporting bullying behaviour

- Any pupil or parent/guardian 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 special needs assistant, secretary, cleaner etc. 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

- 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.

- 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 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 the 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 may face them from the 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 the 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 parents/guardians an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being 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 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/guardians) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his/ her parents/guardians and the school.

Follow up and recording

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

The school's 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. The records will be kept in an incident file which will be stored in the principal's office. 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 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.
- The relevant teacher must inform the principal teacher of all incidents being investigated.

Formal Stage 1 — **determination** that **bullying has occurred**

- If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

Formal Stage 2 - Appendix 3 (from DES Procedures)

The relevant teacher must use the recording template (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 20 school days after he/she determined that bullying behaviour occurred; and

(b) Where the school has decided as part of its anti-bullying policy that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported to the principal teacher or deputy principal teacher as applicable.

Formal Stage 3 – Appendix 5

The relevant teacher together with the child involved on Formal Stage 2, must fill Appendix 5, as part of Restorative Practice.

Gross behaviour —see school's Code of Behaviour Policy

When the recording template is used, it will be retained by the principal in a secure location. In cases where the school has serious concerns in relation to managing the behaviour of a pupil, the advice of the National Education Psychological Service (NEPS) may be sought.

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 if deemed necessary.
- Working with parents/guardians to support interventions
- Circle time
- Peer buddy
- SPHE programme
- R.E. programme

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.
o Group work such as circle time,
   o Buddy or peer mentoring
- If pupils require counselling or further supports, the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. (e.g. NEPS) This may be for the pupil affected by the bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.
- Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

Supervision and Monitoring of pupils:

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with Dullying 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 steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual 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 member of the Traveller community.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 7th April 2014.

This policy has been made available to school personnel, to all parents, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association.

A copy will be made available to the Department of Education and the patron if necessary.

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 the school personnel, published on the school website and will be readily accessible to parents and pupils on request and provided to the Parents' Association.

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

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board of Management in September 2023.

Signed on behalf of the Board of Management:

Chairperson

Acting Principal_____   Date 26/09/23
                Ms. Sarah Ryan

Appendix A: 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 need to work in partnership with and keep parents informed on procedures to improve relationships on a school-wide basis.
- The school recognises the role of parents in equipping the pupil with a range of life-skills.
- The school recognises the role of other community agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying.
- The school promotes habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the interdependence of people in groups and communities.
- The school promotes qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among all its members both in school and out of school.
- Staff members share a collegiate responsibility, under the direction of the Principal, to act in preventing bullying/aggressive behaviour by any member of the school community.

Appendix 2 Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate

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

- Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.
- Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.
- Catch children being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school — this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN.
- Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.
- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.
- Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use.
- Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.
- Actively involve parents and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media.
- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.
- Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.
- All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- Ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.
- School staff can get pupils to help them to identify bullying "hot spots" and "hot times" for bullying in the school.
    - o Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas, changing rooms, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision. o Hot times again tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when pupils are in the playground/school yard or moving classrooms.
- Support the establishment and work of student councils.

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))*

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

5. Name of person(a) 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

[blank box]

9. Details of actions taken

[blank box]

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.

Appendix 4 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 *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schoolsi*	*h
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' assotiation?	yes
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staffj?	yes
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 pupils2	
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	yes
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?	yes
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy*	yes
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?	no
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	no
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	no
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?	N/A
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	"
Has the Board put in qlace an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	

Signed

Chairperso , Board of Management

Signed_____ " _____ ""_____

Principal

Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the **anti-bullying policy**

The Board of Management of ___I___ '''___ales'___ wishes to inform you that:

o   The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of___'   / ^1 l baa-k___ (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 _____

Chairpers   Board of Management

Signed_____%_____ "_____

Principal