



Iontaobhas Scoileanna Éamainn Rís
Edmund Rice Schools Trust

St Vincent's Secondary School

Glasnevin

Dublin 11



**Anti-Bullying Policy
2022**

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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 Vincent'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.

1. 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;
- Effective leadership;
- A school-wide approach;
- A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
- Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that-
- build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
- explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
- Supports for staff;
- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

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

Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted, by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
- cyber-bullying and
- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

3. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows: (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

A designated Anti-Bullying Co-Ordinator (21/22 School Year Patricia Brown)

4. 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*):

STAFF

- All staff share a responsibility, under the guidance and direction of the Principal, to act to prevent bullying and harassment by any member of the school community. Teachers will regularly emphasise the importance of raising issues of concern with their Subject Teacher/Form Teacher/Year Head/Anti-Bullying Coordinator/Guidance Counsellor/Deputy Principal/Principal.
- Provision of guidelines for staff in dealing with reports of bullying
- A dedicated Anti-Bullying Coordinator, whose role it is to investigate claims of bullying and to keep a detailed record of incidents, whether resolved or ongoing and to report to management if/when necessary.
- Teachers encourage students to be inclusive in their activities.
- Staff, students and parents are made aware of expectations through the inclusion of information around conduct and respect in the School Journal.
- The Anti-Bullying Policy is available on the school website.
- Regular reminders of the Anti-Bullying Policy are given during the Tutorial period.

STUDENTS

- Prominent presence of materials throughout the school highlighting the importance of fostering a warm, inclusive and bullying-free school environment.
- Students are required to sign the Schools Code of Behaviour which promotes respect for self, others and other people's property.
- Staff, students and parents are made aware of expectations through the inclusion of information around conduct and respect in the School Journal.
- The Anti-Bullying Policy is available on the school website.
- Regular reminders of Anti-Bullying Policy are available on the school website.
- Provision of support for students by Form Teachers, Guidance Counsellor, Anti-Bullying Coordinator, Year Heads, SPHE Teachers, Subject Teachers.
- Involvement of Students in decision making process through development of Student Council, the Mentor System and other positions of leadership (e.g. school band, sports teams).
- Mentors, Student Council Members and students in position of leadership are vigilant in their monitoring of students' relationships and report unacceptable behaviour to the appropriate authorities.

PARENTS/GUARDIANS

- Provision of information about bullying at meetings of incoming First Year Parents and other suitable opportunities during the academic year.
- Staff, students, and parents are made aware of expectations through the inclusion of information around conduct and respect in the School Journal.
- Anti-Bullying policy is available on the school website.
- Parenting classes are offered throughout the year.
- Parents are consulted in the formation of the schools Anti-Bullying Policy.
- Parents attend regular meetings with staff and management (both scheduled on calendar and by appointment).
- The Parents Council enhances the voice of Parents within the school community.

THE SCHOOL AIMS TO FOSTER A POSITIVE SCHOOL CULTURE AND CLIMATE BY DOING THE FOLLOWING

- Modelling respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.
- Explicitly teaching pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like, and feels like in class and around the school.
- Displaying key respect messages in the classroom, in assembly areas and around the school, involving pupils in the development of these messages.
- Noticing and acknowledging desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention in class and assembly and through the awarding of VSWare points.
- Consistently tackling 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 of SEN.
- Giving constructive feedback to students when respectful behavior and respectful language are absent.
- Having a system of encouragement and awards to promote desired behavior and compliance with the school's code of behaviour and routines.
- Promoting the appropriate use of social media.
- Mobile phone and internet use is only acceptable when authorised under direction from teachers for an educational purpose. Students failing to follow our *Acceptable Use Policy* will be subject to consequences stated in the schools Code of Behaviour.
- Actively involving parents and/or the Parents Council in awareness raising campaigns around social media.
- Actively promoting the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.
- Highlighting and explicitly teaching school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and during induction in first year.
- All staff actively looking out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- Ensuring that there is adequate supervision.
- Supporting and encouraging the continued, excellent work of our Student Council.

5. 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*):

All members of the school community have an obligation to report incidents of bullying. Students may report an incident of bullying in the following ways:

- Direct approach to a Subject Teacher, Form Teacher, Year Head, Guidance Counsellor, Anti-Bullying Coordinator, Deputy Principal, Principal.
- A note for a student or parent/guardian handed to a teacher e.g. with homework or in journal.
- A phone call or email by a parent/guardian or student to the Form Teacher, Year Head, Guidance Counsellor, Anti-Bullying Coordinator, Deputy Principal, Principal.
- A note can be placed under the door any of the above.

Incidents of bullying behaviour, no matter how trivial, which are drawn to the attention of a teacher, will be dealt with by the relevant member of staff.

Non-teaching staff e.g. Secretaries, caretakers and cleaners are encouraged to report any incident of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, to the appropriate member of staff.

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:

- The primary aim for the Anti-Bullying Coordinator 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 Coordinator will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
- All reports will be investigated and dealt with by the Coordinator. In that way, students will gain confidence by knowing who the relevant teacher to approach is, they have a concern. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It is made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying, they are not considered to be 'telling' or 'ratting' but are in fact behaving responsibly.
- Parents and students are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible.
- It is important that all involved (including each set of students and parents) understand the above approach from the outset.
- It is the role of the Anti-Bullying Coordinator and any teachers involved to take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour.
- Reports will generally come from the form-teacher, as it is they who primarily deal with matters relating to discipline and care. These reports will be forwarded onto the Anti-Bullying Coordinator, who is the person with overall responsibility for all allegations of bullying.
- If the form-teacher or indeed the Anti-Bullying Coordinator are named in the report, or if there is a complaint regarding a staff member, then the incident will be reported directly to the Principal/Deputy Principal
- Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation in order to ensure the privacy of all involved.

- All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all the students concerned. Students who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way.
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the Anti-Bullying Coordinator 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.
- Where a group of students is affected by a bullying incident, each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the Coordinator.
- 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 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 to discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their students.
- Where it is determined that a student has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him how he is in breach of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and efforts should be made to try to get him to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
- Sanctions may include (but not confined to): Verbal Warning Agreement of Good Behaviour Detention Withdrawal of Privileges (e.g. participation in school events, trips, matches) Suspension, Referral to the Board of Management.
- It must be also made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary actions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his parents and the school.
- 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 agreeable, which can be beneficial in the long term.
- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the Anti-Bullying Coordinator must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:
 1. Whether bullying behaviour has ceased
 2. Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable
 3. Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable
 4. Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents, relevant teachers or the Principal/Deputy Principal.
- Those affected by bullying may be referred to the Guidance Counsellor and/or relevant external agencies for counselling or other supports/interventions. His will also be noted and monitored by the school's Care Team.
- 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 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.
- In the case of a complaint regarding a staff member, this should be referred immediately to the Principal

Procedures for Recording Bullying Behaviour

- The Board of Management ensures that the school has clear procedures for the formal noting and reporting of bullying behaviour.
- While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying are investigated and dealt with by the Anti-Bullying Coordinator, they must use their 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 that bullying has occurred, the Coordinator 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 Anti-Bullying Coordinator must use the Recording Template in Appendix 2 to record the bullying behavior. These records must be completed in full and retained by the Coordinator and a copy provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

Communication of Anti-Bullying Policy

The school's Anti-Bullying Policy will be made available to all school personnel, published on school website, and provided to the Parents' Association. If necessary, a copy will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills and ERST.

- Our Board of Management will ensure that the policy is regularly highlighted and promoted on a school-wide basis with particular attention being given to incoming pupils (transition programme) and parents (Information Evening and Coffee Mornings).
- School management will ensure that pupils, parents and staff members are made aware of the relevant teachers responsible for dealing with bullying concerns.
- School rules and other information on bullying will be provided in pupil friendly, age-appropriate formats and should be displayed around the school building.

Referral of Serious Cases to HSE Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils

- In relation to bullying in Schools, Children First National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011 (Children First) and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools provide that in situations where "the incident is serious and where the behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive, the school must consult the HSE Children and Family Social Services with a view to drawing up an appropriate response, such as a management plan".
- Serious instances of bullying behaviour should, in accordance with the Children First and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, be referred to the HSE Children and Family services and/or Gardaí as appropriate.
- The Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools also provide that where school personnel have concerns about a child but are not sure whether to report the matter to the HSE, the Designated Liaison Person must seek advice from the HSE Children and Family Social Services.

7. 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 is in place. Such students may need counseling 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 behavior is also part of the school's intervention process. Pupils involved in bullying behavior need assistance on an ongoing basis. For those with low self-esteem, opportunities are developed to increase feelings of self-worth. The learning strategies within the school allow for the enhancement of the pupil's self-worth. Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.
- Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behavior are encouraged to discuss them with teachers.
- We support our students through working with the Anti-Bullying Coordinator, the Form Tutor, the Year Head. Those affected by bullying behaviour, may be referred to the Guidance Counsellor and/or relevant external agencies for counselling or other supports/interventions. The student(s) involved will also be noted and monitored by the schools Care Team.

8. Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

9. Prevention of Harassment

The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of pupils or staff or the harassment of pupils or staff on any of the nine grounds specified i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age,

disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

10. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____[date].

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: _____
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _____
(Principal)

Date: _____

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____

Appendix 1 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 them 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.
 - Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas, changing rooms, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision.
 - 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 2 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 behavior

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

Pupil concerned	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Pupil	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

Playground	<input type="checkbox"/>
Classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corridor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Toilets	<input type="checkbox"/>
School Bus	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) *

Physical Aggression	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cyber-bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>
Damage to Property	<input type="checkbox"/>	Intimidation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Isolation/Exclusion	<input type="checkbox"/>	Malicious Gossip	<input type="checkbox"/>
Name Calling	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

9. Details of actions taken

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

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

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

Signed _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date _____

Signed _____
Principal

Date _____

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

To: _____

The Board of Management of _____ wishes to inform you that:

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

Signed _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date _____

Signed _____
Principal

Date _____