St Oliver's N.S. Carlingford

ANTI-BULLYING Policy

St Oliver's N.S. Carlingford 02322I

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behavior guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of St Oliver's National School has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour.

Statement on Bullying

The **St Oliver's National School** community believes that each pupil has a right to an education free from fear and intimidation. The school regards bullying as a serious infringement of individual rights and a serious threat to the self-esteem and self-confidence of targeted pupil(s). Therefore it does not tolerate bullying of any kind. Every report of bullying is treated seriously and dealt with, having due regard for the wellbeing of the targeted pupil(s) and the perpetrator(s).

An 'Anti-Bullying Team,' made up of staff members, exists to cultivate an environment free from bullying. The immediate priority, should a bullying incident occur, is ending the bullying, (*thereby protecting the person(s) being targeted*) and resolving the issues and restoring the relationships involved insofar as is practicable using a "Reform, not Blame" approach.
St Oliver's NS has adopted the KIVA Anti-Bullying Programme, as of September 2023. The KIVA Antibullying Team-one coordinator and one other member of staff will attend all relevant training and ensure the implementation of the relevant action plans.

All pupils are expected to contribute to the creation and maintenance of a safe environment in the school. On becoming aware of any bullying situation, in school, involving members of the school community they should notify a trusted responsible adult. Bullying behaviour is too serious not to report.

Pupils' participation in school life in general is encouraged through existing school structures. Awareness of bullying, and willingness to take action to prevent or stop it, is part of this participation.

1. In accordance with the requirements of the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000* and the Code Of Behavior guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of **St Oliver's 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.

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2. 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; and
      - 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 behavior (including use of established intervention strategies); and
   ● On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy

3. 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 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 behavior, 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 behavior.

However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful personal or 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 behavior.

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

Incidents of physical action with intent to physically harm another (on the judgment of the relevant teacher) will warrant bypassing the first promise (as referred to in Step 3 in paragraph 6 in this policy) and both parents will be notified of the second promise and details of the event ((as referred to in Step 5 in paragraph 6 in this policy).

This definition includes a wide range of behaviour, whether verbal or written, whether physical or social, whether targeting person or property, whether carried out directly or indirectly or through any electronic or other medium, which could harm a pupil or undermine her/his self-esteem or self-confidence. **Appendix 1** gives a list of specific examples of bullying behaviour. This list is not exhaustive. Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.*

4. The "Relevant Teacher(s)" for investigating and dealing with bullying in this school are initially the class teachers, SET teachers, then the Deputy Principal(as the Designated Anti-Bullying Coordinator see Appendix 5) and finally the Principal.

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity based bullying) used by the school are as follows:
   ● The anti-bullying module of the SPHE programme as it applies during each school year in all classes. The SPHE curriculum makes specific provision for exploring bullying

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from **Junior Infants to Sixth class** as well as the inter-related areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships.

● The teaching and learning of the SPHE curriculum in ALL classes will particularly employ strategies needed to build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils, which promotes the value of diversity; to address prejudice and stereotyping and to highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.

● In 2nd-6th class at least five awareness-raising exercises per school year for each class group (*e.g. from the "Awareness-Raising" strand of the Anti-Bullying Campaign, via its website:* www.antibullyingcampaign.ie) pro-actively explaining the nature and variety, causes, consequences and unacceptability of bullying.

- Pupils are helped to examine the issue of bullying in a calm rational way, outside of the tense context of particular bullying incidents. In the process they are made more aware of the nature of bullying and the various forms that it can take.

- Pupils are made aware that the consequences of bullying behaviour are always bad for those who are targeted, even if this is not always obvious at the time.

- Pupils are encouraged to recognise, reject and report bullying behaviour, either spontaneously or through questionnaires that are regularly used in the school.

● Annual assemblies on the themes including friendship, inclusion, diversity, the school's values and celebration days throughout the year based on these themes at whole school level.

● Cyber-bullying is best dealt with by preventing it happening in the first place. Prevention and any awareness raising measures should focus on educating pupils on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while on-line and also on developing a culture of reporting any concerns about cyber-bullying. The schools '**Acceptable Use'** Policy supports prevention of cyber-bullying.

● *Through presentations or other exercises, the school staff and parents/guardians are made aware of the nature of bullying and the signs that might indicate that a pupil is being bullied. They are encouraged to be vigilant in watching out for signs of bullying and to report any suspicion of bullying they may have to the "Relevant Teacher" (in the case of staff members) or any staff member (in the case of parents/guardians).*

  ● In investigating and dealing with bullying, the class teacher/ or Deputy Principal who is the Designated Anti-Bullying Coordinator will exercise his/her professional judgment to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;

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- 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.

6. 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:

- **Step 1:** The 'Relevant Teacher' investigates all instances of reported or suspected bullying behaviour, whether these take place within the school or outside it, with a view to establishing the facts and bringing any such behaviour to an end. The School, through the 'Relevant Teacher' reserves the right to ask any pupil to write an account of what happened, as part of an investigation. This will be a standard procedure and does not necessarily imply that a pupil is guilty of misbehaviour. Incidences will be investigated using:

  - Class Survey

  -Recording on School Administration System (Aladdin)

- **Step 2:** Pupils who are alleged to have been involved in bullying behaviour are interviewed by the 'Relevant Teacher' to establish the nature and extent of the behaviour and any reasons for it. **If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group** in line with our Code of Behaviour Policy. 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.

- **Step 3:** In the event that they have been involved in bullying behaviour they are asked to sign a binding promise that they will treat all pupils fairly, equally and respectfully including the targeted pupil(s). This will be recorded on the *Teacher Tracking Sheet* by the relevant teacher involved.

- **Step 4:** The 'Relevant Teacher' does not apportion blame but rather treats bullying behaviour as a "mistake" that can and must be remedied. S/he emphasises that the intention is not to punish perpetrators but to talk to them, to explain how harmful and

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hurtful bullying is and to seek a promise that it will stop. If that promise is forthcoming and is honoured there will be no penalty and that will be the end of the matter. Pupils who report bullying therefore are not getting others "in trouble" so much as enabling them to get out of trouble into which they may ultimately get if the bullying continued. When an investigation is completed and/or a bullying situation is resolved the 'Relevant Teacher' will ensure the '*Anti Bullying*' tab on the **Teacher Tracking Sheet** is updated and includes the findings of the investigation, the strategy adopted and the outcome of the intervention, as well as any other relevant information. **This must be completed in full and later updated when the case is closed.** The Principal will have full access to this information to report at BOM meetings.

- **Step 5:** If a pupil has signed such a **promise/agreement** but then chooses to break that promise/ agreement and continues the bullying behaviour, this can then no longer be considered a "mistake." In this event parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed and requested to countersign their daughter's/son's promise.

- **Step 6:** Breach of this additional **promise/agreement (2nd promise)** by further bullying behaviour is regarded as a very grave matter and a serious sanction may be imposed by the school authorities (See sanctions below).**All documentation regarding bullying incidents and their resolution is retained securely in the school.**

Incidents of physical action with intent to physically harm another (on the judgment of the relevant teacher) will warrant bypassing the first promise (as referred to in Step 3 in paragraph 6 in this policy) and both parents will be notified of the second promise and details of the event ((as referred to in Step 5 in paragraph 6 in this policy).

- **Sanctions:**
Where a pupil has been found to be engaged in bullying behaviour, has formally promised to stop and has broken that promise, any of the following sanctions may be imposed:
  - S/he may be required to sign another promise, this time countersigned by a parent/guardian;

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- Parent(s)/guardian(s) may be contacted by the 'Relevant Teacher' and informed of the nature and extent of the bullying behaviour with a view to agreeing a strategy whereby a promise to end the bullying behaviour would be honoured;
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) may be invited to a meeting with the 'Relevant Teacher' and the Principal and the pupil may be suspended from school.
- The case may be referred to the Board of Management and the pupil may be expelled from the school.

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:
   - ● Bullied pupils:
   - Ending the bullying behaviour,
   - Changing the school culture to foster more respect for bullied pupils and all pupils,
   - Changing the school culture to foster greater empathy towards and support for bullied pupils,
   - Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the awareness-raising programme,
   - Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the speedy identification of those responsible and speedy resolution of bullying situations,
   - After resolution, enabling bullied pupils to complete a victim-impact statement,
   - Helping bullied pupils raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school).
   - Implementing a "buddy system" in the school

   - ● Bullying pupils:
   - Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are not blamed or punished and get a "clean sheet,"
   - Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are doing the right and honorable thing and giving them praise for this,
   - Making adequate counseling facilities available to help those who need it learn other ways of meeting their needs besides violating the rights of others,

- Helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities),
- Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils' feelings of self-worth,
- In dealing with negative behavior in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child,
- In dealing with bullying behaviour seeking resolution and offering a fresh start with a "clean sheet" and no blame in return for keeping a promise to reform.

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. The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps as 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 **18.9.24.**

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website (*is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request*) and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills and to 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 will *be otherwise 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 to the Department of Education and Skills and to the patron if requested.

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Ratification and Review:

Signed: _____   Date 18.9.24

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _____   Date: 18/9/24

(Principal)

Reviews:

Signed: _____   Date: __/__/____

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _____   Date: __/__/____

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

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Appendix 1

Bullying can take a number of forms. These may include any of the following (this list is not exhaustive):

- **Repeated aggressive behaviour/attitude/body language, for example:**
  Shouting and uncontrolled anger,
  Personal insults,
  Verbal abuse,
  Offensive language directed at an individual,
  Continually shouting or dismissing others,
  Public verbal attacks/criticism,
  Domineering behaviour,
  Open aggression,
  Offensive gestures and unwanted physical contact.

- **Intimidation, either physical, psychological or emotional, for example:**
  Treating in a dictatorial manner,
  Ridicule,
  Persistent slagging,
  Deliberate staring with the intent to discomfort.
  Persistent rudeness in behaviour and attitude toward a particular individual.
  Asking inappropriate questions/making inappropriate comments re. personal life/family
  Asking inappropriate questions/making inappropriate comments re. social life or schoolwork.

- **Interference with property, for example:**
  Stealing/damaging books or equipment
  Stealing/damaging clothing or other property
  Demanding money with menaces
  Persistently moving, hiding or interfering with property
  Marking/defacing property

- **Undermining/Public or Private Humiliation, for example:**
  Condescending tone,
  Deliberately withholding significant information and resources,
  Writing of anonymous notes,

Malicious, disparaging or demeaning comments,

Malicious tricks/derogatory jokes,

Knowingly spreading rumours,

Belittling others' efforts, their enthusiasm or their new ideas,

Derogatory or offensive nicknames (name-calling),

Using electronic or other media for any of the above (cyber bullying),

Disrespectfully mimicking a particular individual in his/her absence,

Deliberately refusing to address issues focusing instead on the person.

- **Ostracising or isolating, for example:**
  Deliberately marginalising an individual

  Deliberately preventing a person from joining a group,

  Deliberately preventing from joining in an activity, schoolwork-related or recreational

  Blaming a pupil for things s/he did not do.

- **Cyber-bullying: This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving**

  Bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, e-mail, instant messaging (IM), apps, gaming sites, chat-rooms and other online technologies.

  Being the target of inappropriate or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying. As cyber-bullying uses technology to perpetrate bullying behaviour and does not require face to face contact, cyber-bullying can occur at any time (day or night). Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyber-bullying. For example, a target may be sent homophobic text messages or pictures may be posted with negative comments about a person's sexuality, appearance etc.

Appendix 2

Procedures to prevent cyber-bullying:

- Staff, pupils, parents and Board of Management (BoM) will be made aware of issues surrounding cyber bullying through the use of appropriate awareness-raising exercises

- Pupils will learn about cyber bullying through Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), assemblies, friendship activities and other curriculum projects

- Classes 1st to 6th will participate in class cyberbullying lessons through the use of teaching resources such as WebWise (HTML Heroes, My Selfie and the Wider World etc.)

- Staff CPD (Continuous Professional Development) will assist in learning about current technologies

- Parents will be provided with information and advice on how to combat cyber bullying

- Pupils will be aware of the Acceptable Use Policy at the start of each academic year and it will be referred to when needed through out the year

- Parents will be made aware of the Acceptable Use Policy prior to enrolment and to discuss its meaning with their children

- All reports of cyber bullying will be investigated, recorded and monitored regularly

- The Gardaí will be contacted in cases of actual or suspected illegal content

- This policy will be reviewed annually. Pupils, parents and staff will be involved in reviewing and revising this policy and any related school procedure

- Our school's approach to tackling and preventing bullying will aspire to take particular account of the needs of pupils with disabilities or with SEN, should join up with other relevant school policies and supports and should ensure that all the

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services that provide for such pupils work together. Approaches to decreasing the likelihood of bullying for pupils with SEN include improving inclusion, focusing on developing social skills, paying attention to key moments such as transitioning from primary to post-primary and cultivating a good school culture which has respect for all and helping one another as central.

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Appendix 5: Role of the Designated Anti-Bullying Coordinator

The Designated Anti-Bullying Coordinator is responsible for:

- Supplying and replenishing Incidents reported on the ***Teacher Tracking Sheet*** and sets of Class Surveys in the office, staffroom and reminding class teachers to do the same for their anti-bullying classroom folders throughout the year.

- Ensuring all teachers are signed up and using the online resources on http://www.antibullyingcampaign.ie/ and have access to our schools anti-bullying form templates.

- Encouraging and ensuring all teachers to implement the anti-bullying related content of the Stay Safe Programme throughout the school.

- Ensuring JI-1st are doing the Stay Safe and other aspects of anti-bullying work in their classrooms and are included in whole school anti-bullying campaign events in an age appropriate way.

- Ensuring the senior class teachers (2nd-6th) are implementing the Raising Awareness Strand of our policy (set out in appendix 3 of the policy) on a continuous bases.

- Ensuring as a school, we are doing our best to equip children with strategies to deal with bullying behaviour and understand what bullying is and its effects.

- Ensuring all children and parents are educated about the dangers of bullying so they never ever want to bully or hurt another person in this way. It is hoped once they come to realise the horrible effects of bullying through the raising awareness strand-a positive culture of anti-bullying will be created

- Setting out a timetable of anti-bullying campaign events throughout the academic year for pupils, teachers and parents and coordinating events such as anti-bullying poster and slogan competitions, or other whole school events such as a friendship day etc.

- Ensuring the steps and procedure of dealing with bullying set out in the policy are understood by all members of the school community and implemented correctly by teachers and parents.

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- Using his/her professional judgment to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved by liaising with the teachers and Principal when necessary about individual cases.

- Ensuring the Principal is the last step in the programme.

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