ST OLIVER POST PRIMARY SCHOOL
OLDCASTLE, CO MEATH

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

1. Introduction

St Oliver Post Primary School's ethos and mission statement recognises the dignity and uniqueness of each member of its school community - student, teacher, parent and ancillary staff. It acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment. In accordance with our ethos we will continue to promote responsibility, respect, tolerance, dignity and understanding.

2. Scope

The policy seeks to address bullying behaviour and harassment. The policy shall be applicable during:

- School time (including break and lunch times)
- Going to and from school
- School tours and trips
- Extra-curricular activities
- Examinations
- Any occasion when the student is in uniform.

3. Rationale

It has been necessary to devise an anti-bullying policy to address incident(s) of bullying which may occur in the school context as cited under heading 2. Staff, students and parents/guardians have identified this issue as a priority. This policy acknowledges the legal and regulatory context and aims to encompass the following legal documents:

- The Department of Education & Science Guidelines of Countering Bullying Behaviour in the Post Primary Schools, 1993 and 2013
- Education Welfare Act 2000
- Equal Status Acts, 2000 to 2004
- Child Protection Guidelines and Procedures for Post-Primary Schools
- Other Relevant Resource Documents and legislation include:
- Circular M33/91: Guidelines towards a positive policy for school behaviour and discipline
- (including a Suggested Code of Behaviour and Discipline for Post Primary Schools)
- Circular M44/05:
- The Education Act, 1998
- St Oliver Post Primary School Code of Behaviour and related policies

4. Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School's Mission Statement

- St Oliver Post Primary School, Oldcastle seeks to enable each student to develop his / her full potential.
- Provides a safe and secure environment for learning
- Promotes respect for the diversity of values, beliefs, traditions, languages and ways of life in society.
- Promotes habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the interdependence of people in groups and communities.
- Takes particular care of 'at risk students' and uses its monitoring systems to provide early intervention when/if necessary and responds to the needs, fears and anxieties of individual students in a sensitive manner.

5. Goals/Objectives

- To create a school ethos which encourages students to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour
- To raise awareness of bullying as an unacceptable form of behaviour within the school community
- To ensure that the school's S.P.H.E. Programme raises awareness of the factors associated with bullying behaviour and develops appropriate knowledge, skills and behaviours
- To take action in an attempt to prevent incidents of bullying behaviour e.g. – to ensure comprehensive supervision and monitoring measures through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation
- To develop procedures for reporting and recording incidents of bullying behaviour
- To develop procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviours
- To develop a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and those involved in bullying behaviour

6. Identifying Actions to Prevent Bullying Behaviour

- Publishing and Publicising an Anti-Bullying Policy.
- The Anti-Bullying Policy will be included in the school journal, the School Plan and discussed in S.P.H.E. class.
- Supervision and Monitoring
- Students are supervised in the corridors and also at lunch times by staff.

- The students' internet sessions are supervised by a teacher. Refer to I.T. Policy & Acceptable Use policy.

7. Involving Parents/Guardians and the Wider Community
- The Anti Bullying Policy will be available on the website, www.stoliverpps.ie, and student journals
- There is a Cyber-bullying section on the school website, www.stoliverpps.ie
- Parents of 1st years are also informed about school policies and procedures during our Induction Evening held in September of 1st year.

8. Inclusion in the Curriculum
- SPHE provides students with opportunities to discuss appropriate behaviour.
- Cross curricular links include C.S.P.E./R.S.E. etc
- ICT classes and E-Learning Plan
- 1st Year Induction Programme.
- Friendship Week
- Positive Discipline System
- Peer Mentoring Programme
- All staff will be aware of and implement this policy.

9. Cyber-bullying
- Cyber bullying is when someone is tormented, threatened, harassed, humiliated, embarrassed, or otherwise targeted by another person using the Internet, interactive and digital technologies or mobile phones.
- St. Oliver Post Primary School has a duty of care to all its pupils. As such if there are reported incidents of cyber bullying involving students of this school, School Management shall investigate the incident where possible and disciplinary sanctions may be taken.
- The school also reserves the right to report any such bullying activity to the proper authorities.

10. Procedures for dealing with incidents of bullying

Tell a responsible adult

1. Students should discuss any incident of bullying with a teacher; this is responsible behaviour and promotes the "telling" culture within the school.
2. School policies and procedures are designed to help promote an atmosphere of mutual respect and acceptance of others. The school's code of behaviour and pastoral care structures in particular demonstrate this.
3. Parents/guardians should contact the Tutor / Year Head regarding suspected incidents of bullying behaviour that have come to their attention through their children, friends of their children or other parents.

School Investigation

Incidents of bullying behaviour, no matter how trivial, which are drawn to the attention of a teacher, will be dealt with in the following manner:

1. Appropriate personnel will speak and listen to all of the students involved in a bullying incident. (Year head and/or deputy principal and/or principal)
2. The alleged victim and alleged perpetrators of the incident will be spoken to and encouraged to solve the problem.
3. The alleged victim and perpetrators may be **invited** to provide a written statement detailing the incident(s).
4. All meetings will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils involved.
5. Records will be kept of all incidents and of the procedures that were followed.
6. The Deputy Principal and Principal will be kept informed of all incidents and have access to relevant written records.
7. Year Head will monitor progress of students involved in a bullying incident by liasing with tutor and students involved (separately) at follow-up meetings.

Sanctions / Support

1. Where the incident is deemed to be minor, a verbal warning will be given to the bully to stop the inappropriate behaviour, pointing out how he/she is in breach of the Code of Behaviour and trying to get him/her to see the situation from the victim's point of view. If deemed appropriate, parents **may** be contacted.
2. If the incident is deemed to be serious, appropriate sanctions **may** be imposed in accordance with the sanctions in the school's code of behaviour.
3. If there is serious incident, perhaps repeated verbal assault or coercion, the matter should be reported to the Deputy or Principal, parents will be involved and appropriate investigations conducted..
4. Where the incident is deemed to be more serious (e.g. gross misbehaviour or physical assault), the Principal should be informed immediately and they will inform the Board of Management, if necessary.
5. Offenders and victims of bullying may be referred to Counselling/Guidance.

6. Where sanctions are deemed appropriate, they may include: (in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour)
   - A contract of good behaviour
   - School community service i.e helping to maintain or improve the school community/environment
   - Withdrawal of privileges
   - Other sanctions as may be deemed appropriate e.g. Detention
   - Suspension
   - Expulsion.

Board of Management

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

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.

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 adopted by the Board of Management on _____ [date].

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.

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.

Appendix

Definitions of Bullying

i. Bullying
- Bullying is repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or a group against other individual(s). (Department of Education & Science Guidelines, 1993).
- In this school persistent unacceptable behaviour is considered to be bullying behaviour.

ii. Harassment
- Harassment, any form of unwanted conduct in relation to any of the nine groups named in the equality legislation that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment for the victim.

Types of Bullying – Example of Behaviour.
- These may be physical, verbal or psychological in nature.
- Harassment and discrimination based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation, e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc.
- Physical Aggression
- Damage to property
- Name calling
- Constant negative intimidating comments
- The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person
- Graffiti
- Extortion
- Intimidation
- Gestures
- Silent telephone/mobile phone call
- Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls
- Abusive text messages
- Abusive email
- Cyber-bullying - Abusive website comments/Blogs/pictures
- Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation
- Name calling

This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:
- Malicious gossip
- Isolation and exclusion
- Ignoring
- Excluding from the group
- Taking someone's friends away
- Spreading rumours
- Unwelcome sexual comments or touching
- Harassment.

This list is not exhaustive and simply outlines examples of behaviour.

Signs and Symptoms of Bullying Behaviour:

The following signs/symptoms may suggest that a pupil is being bullied:-
- anxiety about travelling to and from school - requesting parents to drive or collect them, changing route of travel, avoiding regular times for travelling to and from school;
- unwillingness to go to school, refusal to attend, mitching;
- deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school;
- pattern of physical illnesses (e.g. headaches, stomach aches);
- unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour; it may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or more especially after longer school holidays;
- visible signs of anxiety or distress - stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, bedwetting;
- spontaneous out-of-character comments about either pupils or teachers;
- possessions missing or damaged;
- increased requests for money or stealing money;
- unexplained bruising or cuts or damaged clothing;
- reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling him/her.

St Oliver Post Primary School Mission Statement

St. Oliver Post Primary School is committed to quality education.

It seeks to enrich students' lives and empower them for life's many challenges.

This is done in a caring atmosphere of good order and discipline and in partnership with parents.

In our daily life we value the principles of justice, mutual respect, equality and tolerance leading to promotion of a positive self-image and the confidence to achieve the highest levels.

St. Oliver P.P. School

BULLYING RECORD

NAME	
CLASS	

INCIDENT

DATE	

According to the school bullying procedure I understand that I am being warned that the above behaviour is not to happen again

PUPILS SIGNATURE	
PARENTS SIGNATURE	