Streamstown National School

Anti-Bullying Policy

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1. **Full Compliance**

   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 Streamstown 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.

2. **Key Principles of Best Practice**

   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.

3. **The Definition of Bullying**

   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, extortion isolation and persistent name calling
   - verbal abuse
   - physical aggression,extortion,damage to property
   - intimidation
   - telephone calling, text messaging, cyber-bullying and

- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community or any minority/ethnic group, 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.

This policy applies to activities and events that take place:

- During School Time.
- Going to and from school.
- School Trips/Tours.
- Extra – Curricular activities

Streamstown school reserves the right to take action against bullying perpetrated outside the school which spills over into school.

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. Who is Responsible for Doing What
The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows:
The Principal – Helena Farrell, Deputy Principal – Colette Robbins and class teacher. Where appropriate other teachers will deal with bullying. In general, all staff members must be vigilant at all times, and have a duty to report suspected or potentially bullying behaviour.

5. Our Education and Prevention Strategies
The education and prevention strategies that will be used by the school are as follows

- The school staff and Board of Management take several measures to curtail bullying.
- The school acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment.
- The school promotes positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among all its members.
- The school has a Code of Discipline, Mobile Phone Policy and Acceptable Use Policy in place.
- All staff members, parents and pupils must treat everyone with respect.
- The school community is organised in order to minimise opportunities for bullying.
- Supervision is sufficient at all times.
- New pupils are monitored as to how they are settling in.
- School personnel, parents and all pupils, are watchful.

- The school SPHE plan and especially the Stay Safe Programme address the issue of bullying. In class we talk about bullying with the whole class at least once a term.The educational resources from www.webwise.ie will be used to address cyberbulling and internet safety.
- The staff address the issue of inappropriate sexual language, and its use as a bullying tool. Homophobic and transphobic bullying are unacceptable.
- Complaints are dealt with quickly, firmly and fairly, involving parents in the process where appropriate.
- The school has a firm and fair discipline structure.
- Pupils are encouraged to discuss how they get on with other people and to form positive attitudes towards other people. This includes work on friendship and what it really means.

6. **Our Procedures Re Bullying Behaviour**
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:
Procedure
When a complaint of bullying is made or when bullying behaviour is observed the following procedure will be followed:
A – Reporting
Children will be constantly assured that their reports of bullying either for themselves or their peers will be treated with sensitibity.
Children should report to members of staff if they feel other children are being bullied.
Parents should contact the school if they feel their child is being bullied or involved in bullying.
Members of staff should approach the principal/chairperson if they feel they are being bullied.

B – Investigation
An incident of bullying behaviour will be noted and recorded by the teacher. The complaint will be investigated fully by interviewing the children named and any others who may be able to provide information. At all times they will be encouraged to discuss everything with their parents. Victim and perpetrator will be treated seriously and with fairness and compassion. All sides will be listened to. Parents may be informed at any stage. If considered necessary the Board of Management will be informed. A written record may be made and retained in the school files.

C – Outcome
If the school authorities feel that there is evidence of bullying the following strategies will be used:
If the behaviour is not too serious and the staff have confidence that it may end.
The class teacher and principal or deputy principal will discuss the matter with both parties.
The perpetrator will be warned of the consequences should there be further bullying behaviour.
The situation will be monitored closely.
Parents may be informed.
If the behaviour is of a severe bullying nature or escalates, the situation becomes more serious, and some or all of the following sanctions may be applied:
- Continued reasoning with the pupil and advice on how to behave.
- Loss of various privileges.
- Parents may be requested to escort their child to and from school.
- In very serious cases it is within the power of the Board of Management to exclude a pupil for a period or ultimately to expel a pupil. (Rule 130 Rules for National Schools)

The school may seek assistance and advice from outside agencies if necessary, including National Educational Psychological Service, the National Educational Welfare Board and the HSE (social services).

The aim of the school will always be reconciliation and resolution of conflict.

7. The Schools Programmes of Support

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:

Victim: Those who have been subjected to bullying will be supported through the pastoral care structures in the school. Support will be provided for anyone who has been /is being bullied by offering them an immediate opportunity to talk about their experience with their teacher or another teacher. A victim will be assured that the school community will help them and put monitoring procedures in place to safeguard them. Children have the opportunity to participate in social skills lessons designed to raise their self-esteem and to develop their friendship and social skills. The victims may have counselling provided by outside agencies.

Perpetrator: Those who have been found to have engaged in bullying will be encouraged to recognise the inappropriateness of such behaviour and the seriousness of its effects on others. Help and support will also be sought for the bully. This will include speaking to them to discover why they became involved. For those low in self-esteem, opportunities will be developed to increase feelings of self-worth through the SPHE programme. Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour should be encouraged to discuss them with teachers. Pupils who engage in serious bullying behaviour may have counselling provided.

Other: Class lessons will be taught, mainly in S.P.H.E. dealing with respect, self-esteem and the issue of bullying. It is ensured that children know where get help from - parents. Children are assured that they may seek help from many sources – parents, school community and outside agencies.

8. Cyber Bullying and Key Measures

Anti–Cyber-Bullying Policy

Streamstown National School aims to ensure that children are safe and feel safe from bullying, harassment and discrimination. This school is committed to teaching children the knowledge and skills to be able to use ICT effectively, safely and responsibly.

UNDERSTANDING CYBER-BULLYING:

- Cyber bullying is the use of ICT (usually a mobile phone and or the internet) to abuse another person
- It can take place anywhere and involve many people
- Anybody can be targeted including pupils and school staff
- It can include threats, intimidation, harassment, cyber-stalking, vilification, defamation, exclusion, peer rejection, impersonation, unauthorized publication of private information or images etc.
- While bullying involves a repetition of unwelcome behaviour the **Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools, September 2013,** states:

2.1.3. In addition, in the context of these procedures 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.

WHAT IS CYBER-BULLYING?
There are many types of cyber-bullying. The more common types are:

1. **Text messages** – can be threatening or cause discomfort. Also included here is 'Bluejacking' (the sending of anonymous text messages over short distances using bluetooth wireless technology)
2. **Picture/video-clips via mobile phone cameras** – images sent to others to make the victim feel threatened or embarrassed
3. **Mobile phone calls** – silent calls, abusive messages or stealing the victim's phone and

using it to harass others, to make them believe the victim is responsible

4. **Emails** – threatening or bullying emails, often sent using a pseudonym or somebody else's name

5. **Chat room bullying** – menacing or upsetting responses to children or young people when they are in a web-based chat room

6. **Instant messaging (IM)** – unpleasant messages sent while children conduct real-time conversations online using MSM (Microsoft Messenger), Yahoo Chat or similar tools

7. **Bullying via websites** – use of defamatory blogs (web logs), personal websites and online personal 'own web space' sites such as You Tube, Facebook, Ask.fm, Bebo (which works by signing on in one's school, therefore making it easy to find a victim) and Myspace – although there are others.

Explanation of slang terms used when referring to cyber-bullying activity:

1. **'Flaming':** Online fights using electronic messages with angry and vulgar language

2. **'Harassment':** Repeatedly sending offensive, rude, and insulting messages

3. **'Cyber Stalking':** Repeatedly sending messages that include threats of harm or are highly intimidating or engaging in other on-line activities that make a person afraid for his or her own safety

4. **'Denigration':** 'Dissing' someone online. Sending or posting cruel gossip or rumors about a person to damage his or her reputation or friendships

5. **'Impersonation':** Pretending to be someone else and sending or posting material online that makes someone look bad, gets her/him in trouble or danger, or damages her/his reputation or friendships

6. **'Outing and Trickery':** Tricking someone into revealing secret or embarrassing information which is then shared online

7. **'Exclusion':** Intentionally excluding someone from an on-line group, like a 'buddy list'

This list is not exhaustive and the terms used continue to change.

AIMS OF POLICY:
• To ensure that pupils, staff and parents understand what cyber bullying is and how it can be combated
• To ensure that practices and procedures are agreed to prevent incidents of cyber-bullying
• To ensure that reported incidents of cyber bullying are dealt with effectively and quickly.

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 week activities and other curriculum projects
• The school will engage a speaker to facilitate a workshop on cyber bullying for 5th and 6th classes annually. Classes 1st to 6th will participate in the Stay Safe Programme.
• 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 sign an Acceptable Use of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) contract
• Parents will be expected to sign an Acceptable Use of ICT contract prior to enrolment and to discuss its meaning with their children
• Pupils and parents will be urged to report all incidents of cyber bullying to the school
• All reports of cyber bullying will be investigated, recorded, stored in the Principal's office and monitored regularly
• Procedures in our school Anti-bullying Policy shall apply
• The police 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

INFORMATION FOR PUPILS:

If you are being bullied by phone or on the Internet:

- Remember, bullying is never your fault. It can be stopped and it can usually be traced.
- Don't ignore the bullying. Tell someone you trust, such as a teacher or parent or call an advice line.
- Try to keep calm. If you are frightened, try to show it as little as possible. Don't get angry, it will only make the person bullying you more likely to continue.
- Don't give out your personal details online – if you are in a chat room, do not say where you live, the school you go to, your email address etc. All these things can help someone who wants to harm you to build up a picture about you.
- Keep and save any bullying emails, text messages or images. Then you can show them to a parent or teacher as evidence.
- If you can, make a note of the time and date bullying messages or images were sent, and note any details about the sender
- There is plenty of online advice on how to react to cyber bullying. For example, Ie.reachout.com and www.wiredsafety.org have some useful tips.

Text/video messaging

- You can easily stop receiving text messages for a while by turning-off incoming messages for a couple of days. This might stop the person texting you by making them believe you've changed your phone number
- If the bullying persists, you can change your phone number. Ask your mobile service provider about this.
- Don't reply to abusive or worrying text or video messages.
- Your mobile service provider will have a number for you to ring or text to report phone bullying. Visit their website for details.
- Don't delete messages from cyber bullies. You don't have to read them, but you should keep them as evidence.

Useful Websites

www.spunout.ie   www.childnet.int.org

www.kidsmart.org.uk/beingsmart   www.antibullying.net

www.bbc.co.uk./schools/bullying   http://ie.reachout.com

www.childline.ie/index.php/support/bullying/1395   www.abc.tcd.ie

www.chatdanger.com   www.sticksandstones.ie

www.kidpower.org

Compiled by the staff of Streamstown National School on 26th February 2018.

9. What the Board of Management Confirms
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.

10. The School Will Act To Stop Any Harassment
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.

11. When The Board Approved This Policy
Communication
This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

12.Implementation:
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 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.

Following formulation in consultation with the Parents' Association, Student Council and staff of the school, this policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____

Signed: _____   Signed: _____
(Chairperson of Board of Management)   (Principal)

 Date: _____   Date: _____