

Sandford Park School

Anti-Bullying Policy

1. Rationale:

Sandford Park School (“the School”) is a community of teachers, students, parents and non-teaching staff that aims to provide the highest possible standard of education for all its students in a stable, non-threatening environment. As bullying is known to cause physical and/or psychological damage and to negatively affect the quality of the teaching and learning provided, all members of the School are united in recognising their role in supporting an anti-bullying ethos and a whole school anti-bullying environment.

It is the responsibility of every member of the School community to respect the right of others to learn in an atmosphere free from threats towards themselves or their belongings and to assist in the prevention of bullying.

The malicious sharing of intimate images online can take the form of cyberbullying and more seriously, can be a child protection issue and all cases involving the creation, distribution or possession of explicit images of children are potentially criminal and will be reported to An Garda Síochána.

To this end it is imperative that every member of the School community recognises that bullying or harassing behaviour will not be tolerated.

2. Scope:

The School Anti-Bullying Policy (“the Policy”) applies in the following contexts:

- 2.1. The relationships between students and other students.
- 2.2. The relationships between students and their teachers.

3. Application:

The Policy applies to the following:

- 3.1. When students are on the School grounds.
- 3.2. When students are travelling to and from School.
- 3.3. When students are on School tours and trips.
- 3.4. When students are engaged in extracurricular activities organised by the School.
- 3.5. The School reserves the right, in exceptional circumstances, to apply the Policy in respect of bullying or harassment that occurs at any other time when, in the opinion of the Principal and/or the Board of Governors of Sandford Park School (“the Board”), there is a clear connection with the School, and the alleged behaviour is likely to have a significant impact on the work of the School.

This could include (but is not limited to), for example, the bullying of a student using social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter or other such sites.

4. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the National Education and Welfare Board (“NEWB”), the Board has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the School’s overall code of behaviour. The Policy fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* which were published in September 2013.
5. The Board recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of students and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:
 - 5.1. A positive school culture and climate which
 - 5.1.1. is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
 - 5.1.2. encourages students to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
 - 5.1.3. promotes respectful relationships across the school community;
 - 5.2. Effective leadership;
 - 5.3. A school-wide approach;
 - 5.4. A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
 - 5.5. Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness-raising measures) that
 - 5.5.1. build empathy, respect and resilience in students; and
 - 5.5.2. address explicitly the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
 - 5.6. Effective supervision and monitoring of students;
 - 5.7. Support for staff;
 - 5.8. Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
 - 5.9. On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the Policy.
6. 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, but do not limit, the definition of bullying:

- 6.1. deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
- 6.2. cyber-bullying and sharing explicit images of students without their permission.
- 6.3. 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.
- 6.4. In addition, 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.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including (but not limited to) a once-off offensive or hurtful private message, does not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the School's Code of 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 will be set out in the School Diary and is detailed in Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

7. The "Relevant teachers" for investigating and dealing with bullying are the Class Teachers, the Co-ordinators/Year Heads, the Form Teachers, the Guidance Counsellor, Deputy Principal and Principal.

8. The Anti-Bullying Programme: "Prevention is better than cure".

The Anti-Bullying Programme ("the Programme") contains the education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that are used by the School. The Programme aims to raise awareness about bullying, to make it acceptable to talk about bullying and to take action to prevent such behaviour. In particular, the Social Personal Health Education ("SPHE") and Civic, Social and Political Education ("CSPE") syllabuses are designed to raise self-esteem and to help students deal with the inevitable conflict that one encounters in everyday life in a positive and proactive manner. The Programme comprises the following elements:

- 8.1. The Policy is a function of the School's Code of Behaviour ("the Code"). Copies of the Code are given to all students and parents/ guardians and they enter into a contract to abide by the Code when they join the School.
- 8.2. At the start of each school year, the Policy and the information on bullying in the School Diary is read and discussed by each Form Teacher with the students in his/her Form at an extended registration.
- 8.3. The "Pastoral Care Team" (Class Teachers, Form Teachers, Co-ordinators/Year Heads, the Guidance Counsellor, SPHE/CSPE teachers, Deputy Principal and Principal) assist in the implementation of the Policy.
- 8.4. All junior year groups are timetabled for SPHE. This syllabus incorporates many issues related to bullying. Relationships and Sexuality Education ("RSE") is taught in senior cycle.

- 8.5. Selected senior cycle students may be invited to act as mentors to junior cycle students. They offer friendship, support and advice to younger students and encourage the disclosure of bullying incidents. Training is provided as needed for these mentors.
- 8.6. The non-consensual sharing of intimate images or 'sexting' content of children under the age of 17 years always warrants a report to the school and it will be reported to An Garda Síochána and Tusla.
- 8.7. The Student Council is composed of an elected representative from each form group. One of its functions is the task of ensuring that no student is made unhappy by the deliberate or thoughtless actions of others.
- 8.8. The School displays the Anti-Bullying Charter ("the Charter") (see Appendix 2) in the School Diary and on notice boards around the School.
- 8.9. All staff, students, parents and teachers have the right to access the Policy and the Charter which are on the parents section of the school website.
- 8.10. New students and those who join the School mid-year are allocated a "buddy" who is in the same form to ease their transition to a new school.
- 8.11. *Friendship Week* is an annual event which incorporates a series of challenges designed to promote an environment of collegiality, friendship and tolerance amongst all students.
- 8.12. A wide range of co-curricular options (e.g. Sport, Drama and Music) are available to students which have an effect in promoting positive relations between students.
- 8.13. The supervision of students for 30 minutes before, during and for 30 minutes after school by staff is also important in deterring inappropriate behaviour.
- 8.14. The use of CCTV may also be appropriate in helping to deter and monitor student behaviour.
- 8.15. The Policy is an agenda item at a Staff Meeting at least once in an academic year. It is also discussed annually at a Parent Teacher Association ("PTA") meeting. As part of the ongoing programme of School Self-Evaluation, the School surveys students (e.g. in SPHE class), on matters of importance to student welfare.
- 8.16. Parents are expected to take a proactive role in promoting an anti-bullying message consistent with the Policy.
- 8.17. At the Information Evening for all incoming Form 1 students and their parents/guardians, attention is drawn to the School's Child Protection Policy, the SPHE Programme and this Policy.
- 8.18. Students are asked and encouraged to tell if they or somebody else is being bullied by telling a teacher, parent/ guardian. If students find it difficult to tell, they can write their concerns on a note and hand it up with homework or get a friend to tell a member of staff on their behalf.
- 8.19. Guest speakers from the IT industry, or An Garda Síochána or other organisations may be invited to deliver an anti-bullying presentation or programme to students and/or parents from time to time.

9. Signs and Symptoms of Bullying:

As bullying is not always easy to spot, teachers and parents/guardians should be vigilant in keeping an eye out for signs and symptoms that may indicate that a student is being bullied or is engaging in bullying. Signs and symptoms may include, but are not limited to:

- Deterioration in academic performance.
- Possessions missing or damaged.
- Refusal to talk to a parent/ guardian about what is troubling him/her.
- Reluctance to go to school.
- Generalised anxiety/ difficulties sleeping/ loss of appetite.

10. Procedures for dealing with incidents of alleged or actual bullying

10.1. Reporting, Investigation and Recording

- 10.1.1. All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. Non-teaching staff, such as ancillary staff, Special Needs Assistants (SNAs), grounds staff etc must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to a relevant teacher.
- 10.1.2. The primary aim for the relevant teacher 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 the first instance therefore, the relevant teacher will at his/her discretion, encourage the respective students to reach a satisfactory conclusion without the need for a fully formal investigation of events to take place. The relevant teacher is required to keep a written record of this process and to give a copy to the relevant Form Teacher/s, when appropriate.
- 10.1.3. Whether the parents of those involved are informed of the matter at this point will depend on the judgment of the relevant teacher as to the level of seriousness of the alleged or actual bullying.
- 10.1.4. If these actions are not deemed appropriate, or not found to be effective, then the following procedures will be followed:
- 10.1.5. All incidents of alleged bullying should be reported to the Form Teacher (or a relevant teacher). As parents/ guardians are likely to be the first to become aware of a potential problem, it is their responsibility to report any concerns they may have to a relevant teacher immediately even if no allegation has been made.
- 10.1.6. The alleged victim should be listened to and asked to write an account of the incident. The incident is best investigated outside the classroom in a calm manner and with appropriate privacy.
- 10.1.7. The relevant teacher should obtain written accounts of the incident from the alleged bully/bullies and from any witnesses noting important facts (who, what, where, when, why, names of witnesses etc.). These records should be signed and dated by the student and relevant teacher. These records should be kept in a safe place.
- 10.1.8. Any accusations against a member of the School community found to be false will be taken very seriously and dealt with appropriately.

10.2. Post Investigation Outcomes

If an investigation uncovers no evidence of actual bullying then the issue may be dealt with in the context of promoting better behavioural awareness/standards. Consideration should also be given to offering support (as outlined below in this section) to the student alleged to have been the recipient of the unsubstantiated bullying and the student alleged to have been responsible for the bullying.

10.3. Post Investigation Sanctions for Dealing with Students found to have been involved in Bullying:

(Stages may be skipped as deemed appropriate by the relevant teacher)

Stage 1:

The Form Teacher discusses the reported incident which will have been recorded on the template (see Appendix 1) with the student and a clear warning is given. The student will be told that his/her behaviour is unacceptable and that it must stop.

Stage 2:

The relevant teacher interviews the student accused of bullying using the template from Stage 1. The relevant teacher informs the student's parents/guardians of the incident and seeks a change in the student's behaviour. Following a Disciplinary Meeting, appropriate sanctions will be imposed in accordance with the Code of Behaviour and the parents / guardians will be advised of the possible consequences of a continuation of the unacceptable behaviour. A copy of the recorded incident will also be retained by the Deputy Principal.

Stage 3:

In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately resolved within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded by the relevant teacher in the recording template at Appendix 1. This must be retained by the relevant teacher and copied to the Principal and the Deputy Principal.

- 10.3.1.1. In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:
- 10.3.1.2. Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
- 10.3.1.3. Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
- 10.3.1.4. Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable; and
- 10.3.1.5. Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the School Principal or Deputy Principal;
- 10.3.2. The student accused of bullying comes before the School's Disciplinary Committee and appropriate sanctions are decided upon in accordance with the Code of Behaviour.
- 10.3.3. The student's parents/guardians are informed of the outcome. The Guidance Counsellor is also informed and may discuss the situation further with the parents/guardians.

Stage 4:

The student's case is referred to the Principal and sanctions up to and including suspension may ensue. In extreme circumstances, the student's case may be referred to the Board. (See Disciplinary Procedures involving Suspension_or Expulsion.)

Where a parent / guardian is not satisfied that the School has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent / guardian must be referred, as appropriate, to the School's complaints procedures.

11. Records and Reports

Formal records of all stages of investigations should be kept by the relevant teachers including, but not limited to:

- Notes of all interviews held
- The decision-making process
- The decision and the rationale for the decision
- The sanctions applied including any conditions attached thereto.

The Template for recording bullying behaviour (Appendix 1) will be completed by the relevant teacher and copied to the Principal or Deputy Principal.

12. The School's programme of support for working with students affected by bullying is as follows:

- 12.1. The student who has been bullied will be offered support. This may involve sympathetic listening, the support of a senior cycle mentor, helpful advice, referral to the Guidance Counsellor or a discussion with another member of staff.
- 12.2. The relevant teacher may consider it appropriate to remind all class members of their responsibility in upholding the Policy.
- 12.3. The student responsible for bullying should be informed of the possible impact of his/her behaviour on the person the subject of the bullying and the possible consequences for himself/herself if it were to continue. He/she should receive clear direction in how to change his/her behaviour. He/she may also be referred to the Guidance Counsellor.
- 12.4. Parents / guardians of the students involved will be informed of the issue and the actions taken.

13. Supervision and Monitoring of Students

The Board 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.

14. Prevention of Harassment

The Board 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 students or staff or the harassment of students or staff on any of the nine statutory grounds specified i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

15. The Policy has been made available to all School personnel, published on the School website and provided to the PTA and to the Sandford Park Holding Company ("the Holding Company"). A copy of the Policy will be made available to the Department of Education ("the Department") if requested.

16. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board 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 PTA and to the Holding Company. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available to the Department if requested.

17. This policy was adopted by the Board of Governors on _____ (date)

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

Date: _____ Date: _____

Date of next review: _____

Appendix 1 Template for recording bullying behaviour

1. Name of student being bullied and class group

Name _____ Class _____

2. Name(s) and class(es) of student(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

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

Student concerned	
Other Student	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other (please specify)	

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

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other (please specify)	

5. Name of person(s) 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 (please specify)	

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

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (please specify)

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

9. Details of actions taken

Signed _____ (Relevant teacher) Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

SANDFORD PARK SCHOOL

Anti-Bullying Charter

1. Every student in Sandford Park School has the right to enjoy his/her learning and leisure free from intimidation, both in the School and in the surrounding community.
2. Our school community will not tolerate any unkind actions or remarks, even if these were not intended to hurt.
3. Students should support each other by reporting all instances of bullying.
4. Bullying will be taken very seriously.
5. We are a telling school. Bullying is too important to ignore.

Appendix 3

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

The Board of Governors (“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 (“the 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 Parent Teacher 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 students?	
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 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: _____ Date: _____
 Chairperson, Board of Governors

Signed: _____ Date: _____
 Principal

Notification regarding the Board of Governor’s annual review of the anti-bullying policy

To: _____

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

- The Board of Governors’ 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 3** of the Department’s *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Signed _____ Date _____
Chairperson, Board of Governors

Signed _____ Date _____
Principal

20 April 2018