

Scoil Náisiúnta Naomh Muire,
Ármhach,
Co. an Chábháinn.

Principal:
EDEL CADAM

ST. MARY'S N.S.



St. Mary's N.S.,
Arvagh,
Co. Cavan.

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Parent/Staff Communication Policy

Introductory statement

This policy was developed by the staff of St. Mary's NS, the Board of Management and the parents association in the school year 2015 - 2016.

Its purpose is to provide information and guidelines to parents and staff on parent/staff meetings and parent/staff communication in St. Mary's NS. The family and home are central to the social and intellectual development of the child and the nurturing of good, moral values. The school and the family strive to be mutually supportive and respectful of each other so that the child's education can be effective. All the stakeholders aim to work for the benefit of the child and their learning.

Parents are encouraged to:

- Develop close links with the school
- Participate in meetings in a positive and respectful manner, affirming the professional role of the staff and all staff members in the school
- Collaborate with the school in developing the full potential of their children
- Share the responsibility of seeing that the school remains true to its ethos, values and distinctive character
- Become actively involved in the school/parent association
- Participate in policy and decision-making processes affecting them.

Structures in place to facilitate open communication & consultation with Parents

- Open Day for parents of new Junior Infants – May / June in year prior to enrolment
- Parent/teacher meetings one-to-one in November
- Parents receive school report of each pupil at the end of each school year
- Meetings with parents whose children have special needs
- Consultation throughout the year
- Written communication
- Through the parents' association, parents are invited to discuss and contribute to the drafting and review of all school policies. Decisions taken to change current policies

and procedures or to introduce new ones will be made known to all parents in written format via e mail or the school newsletter/website

- Regular letters keep parents up-to-date with school events, holidays and school concerns
- Homework diaries 1st – 6th class, used to relay messages which are signed between parents and teachers. Parents requested to sign diary each night to certify that homework has been completed
- Parents are invited to events throughout the year e.g. Sports Day, school masses and school concerts
- Involvement of parents in the 'Religion Alive O Programme' section for parents
- Parents are invited to events throughout the year e.g. National Games Day.

Parents of Infants are also welcome to make an appointment any time throughout the year. Infant teachers will be available between 2 – 3pm for this when necessary.

If a parent wishes to consult with a teacher, he/she must contact the school secretary to arrange a suitable time.

It is vital that the school is immediately informed if family events/situations occur that cause anxiety to your child and therefore may adversely affect his/her education In all matters pertaining to the wellbeing and education of pupils, only the parents/legal guardians named on the enrolment form will be consulted by staff.

Parent/Teacher meetings

Formal Parent/Teacher meetings will be held once a year for all classes (Circular 14/04). Where possible, they will be held in the first term, towards the end of November for all classes. They will be initiated by the school staff and details regarding time, etc. will be worked out by the class teacher, in consultation with parents. The school will attempt to co-ordinate times where siblings are concerned. Meetings may take place in classrooms, support rooms or communally in the PE Hall. The teachers use prepared guidelines for the meetings and collaborate in advance about the progress of individual children.

The purpose of the Parent/Teacher meeting is:

- To establish and maintain good communication between the school and parents
- To let parents know how their children are progressing in school
- To help teachers/parents get to know the children better as individuals
- To help children realise that home and school are working together.
- To meet demands for accountability
- To share with the parent the problems and difficulties the child may have in school
- To review with the parent the child's experience of schooling
- To learn more about the child from the parent's perspective
- To learn more about parental opinions on what the school is doing
- To identify areas of tension and disagreement
- To identify ways in which parents can help their children
- To negotiate jointly decisions about the child's education
- To inform the parents of standardised test results according to school policy.

Circular 56/2011 Initial Steps in the implementation of the national literacy and numeracy Strategy has been adopted by the Board of Management. References to parent/school communication are:

Reporting to parents

Parents have the primary responsibility for their children's learning and development. Schools can strengthen the capacity of parents to support their children in this way by sharing meaningful information with parents about the progress that children are achieving in the education system. This information needs to draw on the different sources of evidence that staffs use, such as conversations with the learner, data-collection and documented progress on objectives and milestones reached in their short and long-term planning, examination of students' own self-assessment data, documented observations of the learner's engagement with tasks, outcomes of other assessment tasks and tests, and examples of students' work. In turn, parents will often be able to enrich staffs knowledge of their students' progress through providing further information about the students' learning at home.

Report card templates

Schools should help parents to understand fully the evidence of learning that the school reports to them, especially information from any standardised tests. The NCCA has provided a range of standard report templates to assist schools in reporting information about the progress of primary pupils to parents, including information from standardised tests. The NCCA report card templates were developed through a process of consultation with schools and parents can take account of research commissioned by the NCCA.

The report cards provide for reporting in four key areas:

- The child's learning and achievement across the curriculum
- The child's learning dispositions
- The child's social and personal development
- Ways in which parents can support their child's learning

All primary schools **must** use one of the report card templates (available at www.ncca.ie) for reporting to parents on students' progress and achievement at school with effect from the date of this circular.

Formal Meetings

Formal timetabled parent/teacher meetings take place in November. However, if a parent wishes to arrange a meeting at any stage during the year to discuss their child, they may do so by prior appointment.

- All communication sent from the school will be sent to the child's home address as given on the enrolment form, unless otherwise requested by parents
- In the case of separated parents, requests can be made by both parents to meet their child's teacher(s) individually for parent/teacher meetings.

Formal Meetings-IEPs

Formal timetabled parent/staff meetings on the subject of the **Individual Education Plan (IEP)** will take place in the first term. However, if a parent wishes to arrange a meeting at any stage during the year to discuss their child, they may do so by prior appointment.

Informal Parent/Staff Meetings

1. The School encourages communication between parents and staffs.
2. Meetings with the class staff at the class door to discuss a child's concern/progress are discouraged on a number of grounds:
 1. Staff cannot adequately supervise his/her class while at the same time speaking to a parent
 2. It is difficult to be discreet when so many children are standing close by
 3. It can be embarrassing for a child when his/her parent is talking to staff at a classroom door.

Occasions occur where a parent needs to speak to a staff member urgently. Sometimes these meetings need to take place without prior notice. The Principal will aim to facilitate such meetings making every effort to ensure that the children in the class do not lose out on any of the teaching/learning time.

If parents wish to drop in lunch boxes, sports gear etc, this can be done through the secretary's office as it is important to keep class interruptions to a minimum.

Parents are strongly discouraged from taking pupils out of school during term time in order to facilitate family holidays.

Complaints Procedure

Complaints are infrequent but the school would wish that these would be dealt with informally, fairly and quickly. The following is the agreed complaints procedure to be followed in primary schools.

Stage 1-informal stage

1. A parent/guardian who wishes to make a complaint should, firstly approach the **class staff** with a view to resolving the complaint
2. Where the parent/guardian is unable to resolve the complaint with the class staff he/she should approach the **Principal** with a view to resolving it
3. If the complaint is still unresolved, the parent/guardian should raise the matter with the **Chairperson** of the Board of Management with a view to resolving it.

Stage 2-formal stage

1. If the complaint is still unresolved and the parent/guardian wishes to pursue the matter further, he/she should lodge the complaint in writing with the Chairperson of the Board of Management

2. The Chairperson will bring the precise nature of the written complaint to the notice of the staff and seek to resolve the matter between the parties within 5 days of receipt of the written complaint.

Stage 3

1. If the complaint is not resolved informally, the Chairperson should, subject to the authorisation of the Board:
 - a. Supply the staff with a copy of the written complaint and
 - b. Arrange a meeting with the staff, and where applicable, the Principal with a view to resolving the complaint. Such a meeting should take place within 10 days of receipt of the written complaint.

Stage 4

1. If the complaint is still not resolved, the Chairperson should make a formal report to the board within 10 days of the meeting
2. If the Board considers that the complaint is not substantiated, the staff and the complainant should be so informed within 3 days of the Board meeting
3. If the Board considers that the complaint is substantiated or that it warrants further investigation, the following steps should be followed:
 - a. The staff should be supplied with copies of any written evidence in support of the complaint
 - b. He/she should be requested to supply a written response to the complaint to the Board and should be afforded an opportunity to make a presentation to the Board and to be accompanied by another person to that meeting
 - c. The Board may arrange a meeting with the complainant, who may be accompanied by another person to this meeting.

Stage 5

Following the Boards investigations, the Chairperson shall convey the decision of the Board in writing to the staff and the complainant within 5 days of the meeting of the Board. The decision of the Board shall be final.

Behaviour of all Stakeholders in the School

Positive and respectful communication is of high importance to our school. This not only extends to the children but to all of the stakeholders e.g. the staff, parents and the wider community. Anyone entering our building should feel safe to do so. While the behaviour of children in our school is of vital importance, adults in the school community also have a responsibility to ensure their own behaviour models the types of behaviour expected of children.

It is important that all stakeholders are responsible for their own behaviours in the school. Examples include:

- All stakeholders are expected to speak to each other with respect. Shouting or other aggressive tones are not acceptable. If a stakeholder displays anger or aggression to another member of the school community, they may be asked to remove themselves from the building. In certain cases, the Gardaí must be called
- All stakeholders will treat our children with the utmost respect while on the premises
- Staff should not be asked to speak about another parent's child. The staff of the school will respect your child's right to privacy so it is asked that parents respect other children's rights to privacy
- When stakeholders meet, it is important to respect that the time of meetings should be kept to a reasonable amount of time. Times of meetings should be agreed beforehand and these should be respected
- Staffs are generally available to listen to a quick issue in the morning and after school. However, should a parent need to have a discussion or meeting, an appointment should be made at a convenient time for both parties. This ensures that issues can be resolved. Classes begin at 9:20 am and finish at 3:00pm and this time should not be interrupted.

Safety, Health and Welfare at Work

The Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act became operative on 1 November 1989. It is an important piece of legislation for BoMs and for those who work in schools, as schools and colleges were brought under the scope of safety legislation for the first time.

It is recognised that school staff may be at risk from violence in the form of verbal abuse, threats, assaults or other forms of intimidation. This behaviour may come from pupils, parents, guardians, other staff members or intruders.

In this respect, all staff should be aware of **DES Circular 40/97** which deals with the procedures to follow if they feel they have been subjected to any of the above behaviours. A copy of this circular can be found in the school's Health and Safety folder.

Ratified by the Board of Management

Chairperson: _____

Date: _____



Feidhmeannacht na Seirbhíse Sláinte
Health Service Executive



Healthy Eating Policy

for our

Primary School Children



St Mary's National School
Arva, Co Cavan



Introduction

Health Service Executive Dublin North East (HSE DNE) School's 'Healthy Eating Policy'.

We establish our eating habits at a young age. What we eat affects our own immediate health, and for those who are still young enough it will make a significant difference to how healthy they are in later life.

We know from recent Irish and European studies that our young people eat too much sugar, salt and fats. On the other hand they don't eat enough fruit and vegetables. There is a clear link between what we eat and our risk of becoming over weight/obese and of getting heart disease or diabetes. What we eat when we are young has an impact on how well we are when we are older.

If we encourage young people to choose and enjoy different foods, we have given them a good start to life, and hopefully started some good habits, which will be with them into adulthood. Maybe as part of this project they can also influence *our* eating habits - it's never too late to start healthy eating.

One believes that the success of such a policy depends on the level of co-operation between parents, schools, health professionals and the wider community.

For these reasons the Health Service Executive Dublin North East is delighted to support this healthy eating project with **St Mary's N.S.** . The project adopts a whole school approach that involves the teachers, pupils, parents and the community, in line with the World Health Organisation's 'Health Promoting School'.

Thanks to the school principal, teachers, staff, parents and students for the time and expertise that they put into the development and implementation of this '*Healthy Eating Policy*'.

Hearty gratitude to the staff involved in producing this very important document.

Emer Smyth
A/Head of Health Promotion and Improvement
Health Service Executive – DNE
Date: September 2019

Principal's Acknowledgement

As Principal of **St Mary's N.S.** it is a great honour and source of joy and pride for me to undertake and encourage this HSE initiative 'Healthy Eating' School Policy. On behalf of the school staff I pledge our total commitment to the implementation of this agreed policy within our school. In this regard I look forward to the participation and co-operation of all staff members, pupils and parents and I have no doubt it will greatly benefit the entire school community.

From a young age, habits of a lifetime are established and in so far as health in later life is concerned, children are the ideal group to target with health promoting messages. Accordingly, in **St Mary's N.S.** through our implementation of the Social, Personal and Health Education programme, we endeavour to assist our pupils in the formation of positive and responsible attitudes to eating and to appreciate the contribution that good food makes to health.

I wish to thank most sincerely all those who have participated and contributed enthusiastically and positively to the development of this Healthy Eating Policy:-

Edel Cadam	Principal & HPS Coordinator
Lorraine Smith	Staff Representative
Amy Lynch	Student Representative
Ríona Mac Manus	Student Representative
Hannah Gallagher	Student Representative
Daire Finnegan	Student Representative
Michael Dobson	Student Representative
Emils Vilsons	Student Representative
Monica McCrory	Senior Health Promotion Officer – Schools HSE DNE
Susanne Shevlin	Senior Community Dietitian HSE DNE
Máirín McInerney	Health Education Officer – Oral Health HSE DNE

We proudly regard our school as a 'health promoting school' for the benefit of tomorrow's generation – our children.

Letter of Commitment

The Role of the Principal is to:

1. Sign 'Letter of Commitment' to initiate the process.
2. Set up a Healthy Eating Policy Committee to oversee the development and implementation of the policy. This committee will comprise of teachers, parents, students, school health promotion officer and other stakeholders e.g. caterers, special needs assistant representative etc. In consultation with the community dietitian, the Healthy Eating Policy will be drawn up within an agreed timeframe.
3. Oversee the completion of healthy eating survey and present findings to the committee.
4. Initiate and lead implementation, continuation and sustainability of the policy.
5. Take responsibility for keeping the operational points of the policy on file for future reference and every 2 years review, along with the community dietitian and the schools health promotion officer.
6. Ensure that the draft or final policy is not circulated to other schools as it is based on a school's own individual needs.

The Remit of the Committee is to:

1. Draft Healthy Eating guidelines appropriate to the individual school setting which will form the basis of the Healthy Eating Policy.
2. Forward the draft Healthy Eating guidelines to the Schools Health Promotion Officer for comment and approval in conjunction with the Community Dietitian and Oral Health Education Officer.
3. Circulate the draft Healthy Eating guidelines to staff, parents, board of management, parents' council and students for appraisal.
4. Amend the final draft, based on comments received from above stakeholders.
5. Ratify final draft and disseminate to the wider school community.
6. Implement the agreed Healthy Eating Policy.
7. Organise launch of the Healthy Eating Policy. (optional)
8. Nominate two members to monitor and evaluate the Healthy Eating Policy on a regular basis.

The role of the Community Dietitian is to:

1. Consult and advise committee on policy content where required.

Signed: *Dona Hanlon*
Principal

Date: 26/9/19

Signed: *Monica A. McKeay*
Senior Health Promotion Officer-Schools

Date: _____
HSE Dublin North East

Signed: *Susanne Sharlin*
Senior Community Dietitian

Date: _____
HSE Dublin North East

Signed: *Naiem McInerney*
Health Education Officer-Oral Health

Date: _____
HSE Dublin North East

Only HSE certified Healthy Eating policies can display the HSE logo in any format

Working Group

Edel Cadam	Principal & HPS Coordinator
Lorraine Smith	Staff Representative
Amy Lynch	Student Representative
Ríona Mac Manus	Student Representative
Hannah Gallagher	Student Representative
Daire Finnegan	Student Representative
Michael Dobson	Student Representative
Emils Vilsons	Student Representative
Monica McCrory	Senior Health Promotion Officer – Schools HSE DNE
Susanne Shevlin	Senior Community Dietitian HSE DNE
Máirín McInerney	Health Education Officer – Oral Health HSE DNE

OUR HEALTHY EATING POLICY

What people eat is known to be one of the key factors influencing long term health of school children and staff. The school day provides the opportunity for having at least one of the daily meals within the school. Food is often a feature of school celebrations. The curriculum provides an opportunity to learn and explore about food and healthy lifestyles. Through these guidelines **St. Mary's N.S.** aims to help all those involved in our school community, e.g. children, staff and parents in developing positive and responsible attitudes to eating and to appreciate the contribution that good food makes to health.

1. Parents should ensure that children have a balanced breakfast each morning to help them learn and concentrate better at school.
2. A healthy lunchbox includes a helping of food from the bottom four shelves of the food pyramid.
3. Friday will no longer be a treat day in our school; the children will bring their normal healthy lunch. Teachers will be encouraged to do other fun activities with the children on a Friday as a "treat".
4. Some of the healthy snacks that we encourage include **fresh fruit, vegetables, cheese, standard yoghurts (non dessert), pasta, plain rice cakes and crackers.**
5. Fresh, clean drinking water is available throughout the day from a new mains filtered water fountain. Pupils are also encouraged to bring a bottle of water to school. If children do not drink enough water, they may become dehydrated, thirsty, tired and weak.
6. Our school also hopes to have the School Milk Scheme available to pupils shortly.
7. Pure unsweetened juices or well diluted sugar free squashes (1 part squash 8 parts water) may be included but only as part of children's main lunch meal.
8. Chocolate spreads, chocolate dips/yoghurts and chewy/sticky bars, sweets, chewing gum, crisps, jelly, cereal bars, fizzy drinks and juice drinks are not permitted.
9. Peanut butter and healthy nuts will be allowed at present as snacks. This will be subject to change if we are informed of any nut allergies in the school in the future.
10. Foods which have wrappers are to be kept to a minimum and disposed of properly to reduce litter and protect our school environment.
11. On special occasions (decided on by the school), non-food related treats are to be organised.
12. When refreshments are provided at school-related events, the school should ensure that healthy choices are on offer.
13. Sweet treats for birthdays such as cakes, buns, sweets, party bags etc should not be brought into school. In the school setting, there are so many birthdays, that sweet treats would be available nearly every day.
14. Nutrition & healthy eating will be included as part of the school curriculum.
15. Teachers and staff will provide positive modelling and support attitudes to encourage healthy eating including providing non-food related rewards.
16. 'Healthy Eating Awareness Days' will be held each term as an incentive to encourage healthy eating at school and at home.
17. More information on the Health Promotion in Schools Programme and some helpful leaflets are available on www.healthpromotion.ie and www.safefood.eu/Healthy-lunchboxes.
18. The 'Healthy Eating Guidelines' will be reviewed every two years and the policy will be visibly displayed in the school.

Signed:.....

Donna Marie Harten

Date:.....

29/9/19

Donna Marie Harten
Acting Principal

Scoil Náisiúnta Naomh Muire,
Ármhach,
Co. an Chábháinn.

Principal:
EDEL CADAM

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St. Mary's N.S.

Anti Bullying Policy

Introductory Statement:

The Anti Bullying Policy was formulated by the teachers of St. Mary's N.S., Arva during a planning day.

Rationale:

We believe that the role of the school is to provide the highest possible standard of education for all its pupils. Bullying behaviour, by its very nature undermines and dilutes the quality of education and imposes psychological damage. The staff of St. Mary's N.S. agree that it is an issue which must be positively and firmly addressed through a range of school-based measures and strategies. Therefore using this policy as a guideline all members of the school community are enabled to act effectively in dealing with bullying behaviour.

Relationship to Characteristic Spirit of the School:

We endeavour to create a school climate which encourages respect, trust, caring, consideration and support for others. It is evident that pupils model their behaviour on the behaviour of adults. The principal, teachers, special needs assistants, ancillary staff and parents are encouraged to act as good role-models and not misuse their authority. We believe in order to promote the positive and harmonious environment of the school techniques based on positive motivation and recognition will be outlined and put into place.

St. Mary's N.S. Positive School Policy on Countering 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 disapproves of vulgar, offensive sectarian or other aggressive behaviour by any of its members.
- The school has a clear commitment of promoting equity in general and gender equity in particular in all aspects of its functioning.
- The school has the capacity to change in response to pupils needs.
- The school identifies aspects of curriculum through which positive and lasting influences can be exerted towards forming pupil's attitudes and values.

- The school takes particular care of “at risk” pupils and uses its monitoring system to provide early intervention when/if necessary and responds to the needs, fears or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner.
- The school recognises the need to co-operate with and keep parents informed on procedures to improve relationships within the school community.
- The school recognises the right of parents to share in the task of equipping the pupil with a range of life skills.
- The school recognises the role of other community agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying.
- The school promotes habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the interdependence of people in group and community.
- The school acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual and his/her worth as a human being.
- The school promotes qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among all its members both in the school and out of the school.
- Staff members share a collegiate responsibility, under the direction of the Principal, to act in preventing bullying/aggressive behaviour by any member of the school.

Aims:

- To create a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teachers, pupils and parents.
- To ensure comprehensive supervision and monitoring measures through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation.
- To develop procedures for noting and reporting incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To develop a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the school policy on anti-bullying behaviour.

Content of Policy:

Link to School Ethos:

The staff of St. Mary’s N.S. have devised a positive school policy on countering bullying to be adhered to by all members of the school community. As a staff we believe the centre of a whole school response to bullying is the creation of a positive school climate which focuses on respect for the individual. Therefore, it is important that pupils are encouraged to report incidents of bullying. We realise that this may require a change in attitudes so that pupils understand that they have a responsibility for the safety and welfare of fellow pupils. The staff of St. Mary’s N.S. would like to stress the need to prevent and not just control bullying. It is not sufficient to discipline the bully and to give support to the victim. Following an incident of bullying the issues relating to the prevention of bullying need to be examined. Aspects may need to be altered which may make bullying less likely in the future.

Raising the awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour:

It is our aim to raise the awareness of bullying in our school community so that school management, teachers, pupils and parents are alert to it and its harmful effects. In the future we hope to hold an awareness day for pupils and parents in order to help the development and adoption of an anti bullying code. We believe that this code will give the parents/guardians of a pupil who is a victim, the confidence to approach the school and will also send a clear message to the parents of a pupil who is engaged in bullying behaviour that they have a major responsibility in changing their child's behaviour.

It is of note that teachers can influence attitudes to bullying behaviour in a positive manner through a range of circular initiatives. In English, there is a wide range of literature available which could be used to stimulate discussion. In SPHE the interdependence of people in communities at local, national and international levels is stressed. In Geography and History references to colonisation and exploitation and the long line of dictators could be used to illustrate the negative aspect of power. The work could be extended into Art, Drama, Religious Education, Physical Education. Co-operation and group enterprise can be promoted through team sports in school as well as through practical subjects. Sporting activities in particular can provide excellent opportunities for channelling and learning how to control aggression. Programmes such as the Stay Safe Programme, Healthy Promotion in schools and various other social, health and media education programmes can further help to address the problem of bullying behaviour.

Published material on bullying from various sources mentions the use of anonymous questionnaires to ascertain pupils' perceptions of bullying behaviour. We are aware of the possible abuses that can arise from the use of such questionnaires and that we should exercise extreme caution if we choose to use them. Questionnaires will not be used to identify the pupils involved in bullying behaviour but only to ascertain the extent and type of bullying where it happens and the level of reporting.

Cyberbullying:

Children are forbidden to bring mobile phones to school or on any school related activities e.g. school tours. Use of the Internet is closely monitored and supervised see The Acceptable Use Policy. Information on use of social networks is given to senior classes and their parents through talks and leaflets. Positive use of technology is promoted and students have opportunities to discuss and to be informed about good "netiquette" and personal safety issues.

Comprehensive Supervision and monitoring measures through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation:

It is the responsibility of the school authority in conjunction with staff and pupils to develop a system under which proper supervisory and monitoring measures are in place to deal with incidents of bullying behaviour. Such measures might include control of school activities or a rota basis. All pupils, but in particular, senior pupils can be seen as a resource to assist in countering bullying. It would be desirable if non-teaching staff be part of the process in measures to counter bullying behaviour in schools.

Definition of Bullying:

Bullying can be defined as repeated aggression – verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against others.

Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, which should not be condoned, cannot be described as bullying. When the behaviour is systematic and ongoing it is bullying.

Types of Bullying

(a) Pupil Behaviour

Bullying can take many forms:

1. Physical aggression
2. Damage to property
3. Extortion
4. Intimidation
5. Abusive telephone calls – cyber bullying
6. Isolation
7. Name calling
8. Slagging
9. Bullying of school personnel

(b) Teacher Behaviour

A teacher may, unwittingly or otherwise, engage in, instigate or reinforce bullying behaviour in a number of ways:

1. Using sarcasm or other insulting or demeaning language when addressing pupils; making negative comments about a pupil's appearance or background.
2. Humiliating, directly or indirectly, a pupil who is particularly academically weak or outstanding, or vulnerable in other ways.
3. Using any gesture or expression or a threatening or intimidatory nature, or any form of degrading physical contact or exercise.

Indications of Bullying Behaviour – Signs and Symptoms

The following signs/symptoms may suggest that a pupil is being bullied:

- Anxiety about travelling to and from school
- Unwillingness to go to school; mitching
- Deterioration in educational performance
- Pattern of physical illnesses
- Unexplained changes in either mood or behaviour
- Visible signs of anxiety or distress-stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, crying, bedwetting, etc
- Spontaneous out-of-character comments about either pupils or teachers
- Possessions missing or damaged
- Increased requests for money or stealing
- Unexplained bruising or cuts or damaged clothing
- Refusal and/or reluctance to say what is troubling him/her

These signs do not necessarily mean that a pupil is being bullied. If repeated or occurring in combination, these signs do warrant investigation in order to establish what is affecting the pupil.

Procedures for Noting and Reporting an Incident of Bullying Behaviour:

- All reports of bullying, no matter how trivial, should be noted, investigated and dealt with by teachers. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance.
- Serious cases of bullying behaviour by pupils should be referred immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal.
- Parents or guardians of victims and bullies should be informed by the Principal or Deputy Principal earlier rather than later of incidents so that they are given the opportunity of discussing the matter. They are then in a position to help and support their children before a crisis occurs.
- Parents or guardians must be informed of the appropriate person to whom they can make enquiries regarding incidents of bullying behaviour which they might suspect or that have come to their attention through their children or other parents/guardians.
- It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not telling tales but are behaving responsibly. Individual teachers in consultation with the appropriate staff member should record and take appropriate measures regarding reports of bullying behaviour in accordance with the school's policy and Code of Behaviour and Discipline.
- Non-teaching staff such as special needs assistants, secretaries, caretakers and cleaners should be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the appropriate teaching member of staff.
- In the case of a complaint regarding a staff member, this should normally in the first instance be raised with the staff member in question and if necessary with the Principal.
- Where cases, relating to either a pupil or a teacher unresolved at school level, the matter should be referred to the School's Board of Management. If not solved at Board level, refer to local Inspectorate.

Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying:

Teachers are advised to take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour reported by either pupils, staff or parents. Such incidents are best investigated outside the classroom situation to avoid the public humiliation of the victim or the pupil engaged in bullying involved, in an attempt to get both sides of the story. All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way. When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, teachers are advised to 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. If a gang is involved, each member should be interviewed individually and then the gang should be met as a group. Each member should be interviewed individually and then the gang should be met as a group. Each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone is clear about what everyone else has said.

If it is concluded that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her to see the situation from the victim's point of view. Each member of the gang should be helped to handle the possible pressures that often face them from the other members after interview by the teacher. Teachers who are investigating cases of bullying behaviour should keep a written record of their discussions with those involved. It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident. In cases where it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred; meet with the parents or guardians of the two parties involved as appropriate. Explain the actions being taken and the reasons for them, referring them to the school policy. Discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions taken by the school. Arrange follow-up meetings with the two parties involved separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the victim is ready and agreeable. We believe that this can have a therapeutic effect.

Programme for Work with Victims, Bullies and Their Peers:

Pupils involved in bullying behaviour need assistance on an ongoing basis. For those low in self-esteem, opportunities should be developed to increase feelings of 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. Victims may need counselling and opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem and to develop their friendship and social skills whenever this is needed. Research indicates that pupils identified as low achievers academically tend to be more frequently involved in bullying behaviour. It is, therefore, important that the learning strategies applied within the school allow for the enhancement of the pupils self-worth. Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour should be encouraged to discuss them with teachers.

School Working With And Through The Various Local Agencies In Countering All Forms Of Bullying As An Anti-Social Behaviour:

As previously stated, there should be a whole community approach to the problem of bullying behaviour. The school as a community is made up of the management, teachers, non-teaching staff, pupils and parents/guardians. However, incidents of bullying behaviour extend beyond the school. It is known that they can occur on the journey to and from school. It is necessary, therefore, for an anti-bullying school policy to embrace, as appropriate, those members of the wider school community who come directly in daily contact with school pupils. For example, local shopkeepers should be encouraged to play a positive role in assisting schools to counter bullying behaviour by reporting such behaviour to parents and/or schools as appropriate. Through such approaches a net work is formed. In certain cases, however, it may be necessary to invite the assistance of other local persons and formal agencies such as general medical practitioners, Gardai, Health Boards with their social workers and community workers. A positive community attitude and involvement can, therefore, assist considerably in countering bullying behaviour in schools. The promotion of relevant home/school/community links is important for all schools in regard to countering bullying behaviour and should be encouraged as a normal part of the school's effective operation.

Evaluation of Effectiveness of School Policy on Bullying Behaviour:

As part of the evaluation of the effectiveness of school policy on preventing and dealing with bullying a programme of support for those pupils involved in bullying behaviour should

be an integral part of the school's intervention process. It is advisable to monitor the effectiveness of school policy on this issue. Random surveys could be held to ascertain the level and type of bullying behaviour in school/

Success Criteria:

The success of the policy will be monitored using the following criteria –

- Positive feedback from teachers, parents and pupils
- Observation of behaviour in classrooms, corridors, yard.

Roles and Responsibility:

The Principal will co-ordinate and monitor the implementation of this policy. Each class teacher will observe the children's behaviour and consult with the Principal if they are unhappy with any particular situation. The pupils and parents will contact the Principal if they believe it is necessary.

Review:

This policy will be reviewed in June 2014

Ratification:

The Board of Management reviewed and ratified this updated policy in June 2013

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Chairperson of Board of Management

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Date

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Principal

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Date

Appendix 1

Good Choices/Poor Choices

Positive behaviour is promoted using the “Good Choices/Poor Choices” model. This focuses on four key areas: safety, respect, learning and communication.

When a child receives two poor choices he/she is required to “sit and think” for 3 minutes. This takes place in the classroom and is implemented immediately. In Junior/Senior Infants ten poor choices = 5 sit and thinks = miss “Reward Time”. For each “sit and think” two minutes in “Sin Bin” at break with work. Afternoon “Sin Bin” carried forward to next day.

First – Sixth Classes: six “poor choices” = three “sit and thinks” = miss Reward Time. For each “sit and think” five minutes in “Sin Bin” at next breaktime.

Good choices are rewarded:

Class Rewards include: ten minutes video, basketball, board games and quizzes. Individual rewards include stickers, “lucky dip” children who have forfeited reward time are removed to another classroom at that time.

Aggressive behaviour in classroom or playground incurs automatic “safety room”. The child is supervised by S.N.A. or teacher while there. No conversation is permitted at that time. The time allocated for “safety room” is 3 minutes, automatic loss of “Reward Time” for that day follows. The child, then, apologises to the injured party and is reminded that this behaviour is not acceptable in school and the safety rule is referred to.