

Saint Felim's National School **Farnham Street Cavan**

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

This policy is based on the DES guidelines "Countering Bullying Behaviour". It aims to produce a safe and caring environment in which all children can develop to their full potential.

The school does not tolerate or condone bullying of any form or at any level of the school community. The Board of Management is committed to ensuring that all members of the school community - pupils, staff, and parents are enabled to act effectively to deal with bullying. This policy guides action and organisation within the school for preventing and responding to bullying.

Definition of Bullying

Bullying may be defined as repeated acts of aggression; which may be verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against others.

Bullying may take many different forms such as physical aggression, damage to property, theft of property, extortion, intimidation, abusive telephone calls, isolation, name calling, writing notes, emailing or texting. As a form of aggressive behaviour it is usually hurtful and deliberate. It is persistent over time and makes it difficult for those being bullied to defend themselves.

It is important not to confuse bullying with isolated incidents of aggressive or antisocial behaviour, which must not be condoned. However when the behaviour is systematic and ongoing it becomes bullying.

All members of the school community have a role to play in the prevention of bullying.

Board of Management

The Board of Management is responsible for ensuring that all members of the school community are enabled to deal effectively with bullying. The Board is committed to providing time and resources for the implementation of the policy. The Board will ensure that proper supervisory and monitoring measures are in place to prevent bullying and to deal with incidents appropriately as they arise.

School Staff

The school staff will foster an atmosphere of friendship, respect and tolerance. Children's self-esteem will be developed through celebrating individual differences, achievements, acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour and manners and providing opportunities for success throughout the curriculum and school. Teachers will help pupils to develop empathy by discussing feelings and trying to put themselves in the place of others. Relationships with pupils will be based on mutual respect and trust so that pupils will have confidence in the school staff. Teachers will be vigilant, respond sensitively and caringly to pupils who disclose incidence of bullying and investigate all disclosed incidents of bullying.

Teachers will discuss the school's anti-bullying policy with the pupils and use behavioural management strategies which focus on problem solving and enable pupils to take an active role in finding a solution to problems.

The formal curriculum of the school will also be used to educate all pupils against bullying behaviour. Anti-bullying issues may be raised through the school religion programme, the Social Personal and Health Education programme, the Stay Safe Programme, the Arts and/or Circle time.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to be tolerant and to have mutual respect for each other. Pupils should report incidents of bullying to their parents and teachers.

Parents

Encourage positive behaviour and discourage negative behaviour both at home and at school.

Encourage children to solve difficulties without resorting to aggression.

Encourage children to share, to be kind, to be caring, and to be understanding towards others.

Watch out for signs and symptoms that your child is being bullied or is bullying others.

Don't dismiss your instincts as being wrong.

Discuss the school's anti-bullying policy with her/him.

Support the school in its efforts to prevent and treat bullying.

Procedures for Reporting and Investigating Bullying Incidents

Bullying incidents should be reported to the class teacher and/or the supervising teacher for investigation. This reporting may be done by the pupil, parent or a friend. All reported incidents which are serious or are part of a pattern of behaviour will be noted, investigated and treated as circumstances require. Serious cases of bullying will be reported to the Principal. Reports of bullying behaviour on the way to and from school will be investigated by the Principal.

Responding to Bullying

Support will be provided for anyone who is bullied by offering them an immediate opportunity to talk about their experience with their teacher or other teacher, along with continuing support when they feel they may need it. A victim will be assured that the school community will help them and put monitoring procedures in place to safeguard them.

The school will inform parents/guardians of what has happened and of the measures being taken to help them, encourage them to report further incidences if they occur.

Help and support will be sought for a bully. This will include speaking with them to discover why they became involved, informing their parents/guardians and continuing to work with them in order to modify their behaviour. The school code of behaviour applies to bullying. The bully will be helped to see things from the victim's point of view. Bullies may be excluded from the playground at lunch break or subject to special monitoring procedures and if bullying continues they may be suspended in accordance with procedure.

Any pupil who is involved in retaliation against a pupil who reports bullying will be subject to the school code of discipline. Incidents of bullying will be used as opportunities for re-enforcing the anti-bullying policy of the school. Follow-up meetings may be arranged to assess progress and/or restore relationships.

Ratified by Board of Management on _____
Date

Signed _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

