Anti-Bullying Policy

1. 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 St. Mary's BNS, Haddington Road, Dublin 4, has adopted the following Anti-Bullying Policy within the framework of the school's overall Positive Behaviour Policy. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools which were published in September 2013. This policy supercedes all previous Anti-Bullying policy documents published by the BOM.

2. 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) 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;

<u>Key elements of a positive school culture:</u>

- The school acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment.
- The school acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual and his/her worth as a human being.
- The school promotes positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among all its members.
- The school prohibits vulgar, offensive, sectarian or other aggressive behaviour or language by any of its members.
- The school has a clear commitment to 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 pupils' attitudes and values.
- The school takes particular care of "at risk" pupils and uses its monitoring systems to facilitate early intervention where necessary and it responds to the needs, fears or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner.
- The school recognises the need to work in partnership with and keep parents informed, on procedures to improve relationships on a school-wide basis.
- The school recognises the role of parents in 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 groups and communities.
- The school promotes qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among all its members both in school and out of 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 community.

(b) Effective leadership

(c) A school-wide approach

(d) A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact

(e) 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;

(f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils

(g) Supports for staff

(h) Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and

(i) On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy.

3. 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,

- cyber-bullying

- 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.

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.

Examples of bullying behaviours

General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying	• Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc. • Physical aggression • Damage to property • Name calling • Slagging • The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person • Offensive graffiti • Extortion • Intimidation • Insulting or offensive gestures • Invasion of personal space • A combination of any of the types listed.
Cyber	• **Denigration**: Spreading rumors, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation • **Harassment**: Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual • **Impersonation**: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name • **Flaming**: Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight • **Trickery**: Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online • **Outing**: Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images • **Exclusion**: Purposefully excluding someone from an online group • **Cyber stalking**: Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety • Silent telephone/mobile phone call • Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls • Abusive text messages • Abusive email • Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/ Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles

	• Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures • Abusive posts on any form of communication technology

Identity Based Behaviours
Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).

Homophobic and Transgender	• Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation • Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation • Name calling e.g. Gay, etc ...used in a derogatory manner • Physical intimidation or attacks • Threats
Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community	• Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background • Exclusion on the basis of any of the above
Relational	This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include: • Malicious gossip • Isolation & exclusion • Ignoring • Excluding from the group • Taking someone's friends away • "Bitching" • Spreading rumours • Breaking confidence • Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear
Sexual	• Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching • Harassment
Special Educational Needs, Disability	• Name calling • Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs • Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying • Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues. • Mimicking a person's disability • Setting others up for ridicule

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows:

The Relevant Teachers in this school are:
Principal: Mrs. Maeve Brew
Deputy Principal: Ms. Anne O'Hanlon
Class teachers , Support teachers.

Class teachers will be the relevant teacher in investigating any alleged case of bullying, in the early stages.

Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

Rights and Responsibilities

In the school's daily and routine life the ways in which people interact with each other significantly affect each person's sense of self-worth, belonging and well-being. The fostering of high quality interpersonal relationships among teachers, students parents and ancillary staff is a responsibility shared by everyone.

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

Responsibilities of the 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.

Responsibilities of School Staff

- To acknowledge that bullying is a shared responsibility within the school.
- To implement prevention and intervention strategies which build and maintain a safe learning environment for the whole school community.
- To empower students to deal with conflict in constructive ways.
- To take all reports of bullying seriously and to report them to the Principal, if warranted.
- To document any serious bullying incidents using the Bullying Incident Report Form. (Appendix 3)

Responsibilities of Pupils

- To show consideration, respect and support towards others.
- To be able to identify bullying behaviour.
- To not bully others.
- To tell if they are being bullied or if they see someone else being bullied.

- To engage in responsible reporting when witnessing or experiencing bullying behaviour.
- To develop a sense of empathy for targeted members of the school community and as a result take safe and sensible action as a bystander.

Responsibilities of Parents

- To support the school in the implementation of the policy.
- To watch out for signs that their child may be being bullied.
- To speak to the class teacher if their child is being bullied or they suspect that this is happening. (Please arrange an appointment to speak to teacher, rather than call unexpectedly)
- To speak to the class teachers as soon as they are aware that issues are arising which are affecting their child.
- To instruct their children to tell if they are being bullied or if they have seen other pupils being bullied.
- To notify the school if they think that their child is displaying bullying behaviour and to work with the school in addressing this problem. They should not defer letting the school know of any issue, in the hope that the problem will go away.
- To ensure that if their children are online that they are using social media in a safe and responsible manner; parental supervision is very important in this area as there are risks associated with internet/website access.
- Never to directly approach a student, or the parent of a student, at the school to intervene in behavioural issues.

Sample Education and prevention strategies

The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:

School-wide approach
- A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.
- The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Pupils will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.
- Whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develops an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it-prevention and intervention; the topic of bullying will be on the agenda at each staff meeting.
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community (eg: talks for parents/pupils on Stay Safe, Internet Safety/cyberbullying).
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra-

curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school. (See Supervision Policy and AUP)

- Buddy system and other student support activities that can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school-displayed publicly in classrooms and in common areas of the school.
- The school's Anti-Bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parent(s)/guardian(s) are given a copy as part of the Positive Behaviour Policy of the school upon entry. It is also available on request from the Principal.
- The implementation of regular whole school awareness measures, including posters, competitions, group assemblies etc.
- Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.:
  - Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
  - Hand note up with homework.
  - "Worry box" for older children.
  - Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
  - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.

Implementation of curricula

- The implementation of the SPHE curriculum, according to our school plan, including the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes, e.g. Safe Programme and The Walk Tall Programme (integrated); cyberbullying (Webwise teachers' resources).
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes at primary level. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardai (when available) cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying.
- The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.

Links to other policies

Please read the school's policy documents on Positive Behaviour (including Mobile Phone Policy) Child Protection Policy, Supervision of pupils, Acceptable Use policy, and Attendance (all available on our request).

Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying:

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 :

The primary aim 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);

The school's procedures must be consistent with the following approach.
Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s)) understand this approach from the outset.

Reporting bullying behaviour
- Pupils are encouraged to report bullying behaviour as soon as possible.
- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretaker, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;

Investigating and dealing with incidents:

In investigating and dealing with alleged bullying, the (relevant)teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible;
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.
- Where possible incidents should be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
- 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, the relevant teacher should 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 group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements. The assistance of another member of staff may be requested in such investigations.
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after the interview by the teacher;
  It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s) (if appropriate).
- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy). The school should give parent(s)/guardian(s) an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the pupils;
- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him how he is in breach of the school's Anti-Bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him to see the situation from the perspective

of the pupil being bullied;
- It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parent(s)/guardian(s)) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school.

The following steps will be taken if it is decided that bullying is taking or has taken place:
- In St Mary's BNS, we will aim to enable those involved to engage in a mediated conversation, the purpose of which is to allow the victim to have a voice and the perpetrator to understand the consequences of their actions. All staff will be made aware of the importance of this practice.
- Initially, **a verbal warning** will be given to the perpetrator to stop the offending behaviour. This will be done in the presence of the Principal and another teacher. The perpetrator will **be requested to apologise to the victim** in the presence of the Principal and another teacher and to give an **assurance that the offending behaviour will stop**. Parents will be informed and a meeting with them may be requested.
- There may be **loss of specific privileges** which may include the following: exclusion from break/lunchtime play for a specific number of days; parents may be requested to escort their child to and from school.
- If bullying reoccurs, **it may be deemed necessary to have the perpetrator sign a contract of agreement to stop the bullying behaviour. This would also be signed by the parent(s).** The contract will be monitored regularly by the Principal with the assistance of the class teacher. **If after the above, the bullying behaviour reoccurs**, a formal meeting of the perpetrator, his parents /guardians, the Principal and Chairperson of the Board of Management will be held and **a formal suspension may occur**. The Chairperson/ Principal has the authority to enact an immediate suspension. Alternatively, in certain circumstances, a final Chairperson's warning to the perpetrator may be issued.
- While the school will support parents and pupils in dealing with issues that arise outside of school, parents should be aware that the school is limited in its power to deal fully with issues that arise while the children are not under our care.

Follow up and recording
- 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:
  - ✓ Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
  - ✓ Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
  - ✓ Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable;
  - ✓ Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardian(s)s or the school Principal or Deputy Principal
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved may be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.
- Where a parent(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
- In the event that a parent(s)/guardian(s) has exhausted the school's complaints procedures

and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Recording of bullying behaviour

It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner.

The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

Informal- pre-determination that bullying has occurred
- Incidents of misbehaviour which may be deemed by teachers to lead to bullying, will be investigated. If necessary, brief notes will be kept in Incident Book in Principal's office. (to include brief outline of incident, date and those involved).Teachers will use their professional judgement in determining those incidents which need to be briefly recorded. Incidents of misbehaviour reported to or observed by teachers, during playtime, may be recorded in the Yard Book. Class teachers will keep an eye on this book when on yard duty to note any recurring incidents in their own class.
- The relevant teacher will inform the Principal of on-going incidents being investigated.

Formal Stage 1-determination that bullying has occurred
- If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved**. These records will be kept in the Incident Book in Principal's office.**

Formal Stage 2-Appendix 3 (From DES Procedures)

The relevant teacher must use the recording template known **Appendix 3** to record the bullying behaviour in cases as listed below. This is available on the school administration system: Aladdin and as an Appendix to this policy.
It will be used in the following circumstances:

 a) **in cases where a teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after the teacher has determined that bullying behaviour occurred; and**

b) **Where the school has decided as part of its Anti-Bullying policy that in certain circumstances or incidents of serious misbehaviour that lead to bullying behaviour, this must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.**

When the recording template is used, it will be retained on Aladdin and in hard copy, in a folder in Principal's office.

Established intervention strategies
- Teacher/ Principal/Deputy Principal interviews with pupils.
- Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process
- Working with parent(s)/guardian(s)s to support school interventions
- Circle Time
- Anti-bullying programme and Awareness Raising throughout the school year.
- Identify clear protocols to encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied.
- Ensuring that children and parents accept the **Acceptable Use Policy** of school. (AUP)

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

- All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience e.g.
   - Pastoral care system
   - Buddy system
   - Care team
   - Group work such as circle time
   -School Completion Programme support programmes eg cookery, gardening.

- If pupils require counselling or further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.

- Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

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.
See Supervision Policy.
See AUP
See Mobile Phone policy, included in Positive Behaviour Policy.

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 members of the school community 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.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on   [date].

This policy has been made available to school personnel, is available on request and provided to the Parents. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year, using Appendix 4 of Circ045/2013
Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, and a record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: ___Fr. Pat Claffey_____Signed: ___Maeve Brew_____
        (Chairperson of Board of Management)   (Principal)

Date: _____7th May 2014_____   Date: _____

Date of next review:__June 2015_____

Original signed policy in BOM folder in cabinet in Principal's office

Appendix 3 Template for recording bullying behaviour

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name _____ Class _____

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

3. Source of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es))*		4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))*	
Pupil concerned		Playground	
Other Pupil		Classroom	
Parent		Corridor	
Teacher		Toilets	
Other		School Bus	
		Other	

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 (specify)	

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

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (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 _____

* Note: The categories listed in the tables 3, 4 & 6 are suggested and schools may add to or amend these to suit their own circumstances.

1