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 Joseph's GNS has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* which were published in September 2013.

2. The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

- A positive school culture and climate which-

   - is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;

   - encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and

   - promotes respectful relationships across the school community;

- Effective leadership;

- A school-wide approach;

- A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;

- Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that-

   - build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and

   - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.

- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;

- Supports for staff;

- Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and on-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

3. In accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, bullying is defined as follows : **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 and

- 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.

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying are

- The class teacher(s) initially

- The Deputy Principal /HSCL thereafter if necessary

- The Principal

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

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

- Prevention and awareness raising measures across all aspects of bullying involving strategies to engage pupils in addressing problems when they arise. In particular, such strategies need to build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils

- Provide pupils with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth

- Each class will devise classroom rules at the beginning of each year which will promote inclusion, acceptance of difference and respect for one another. Children will sign their acceptance of the Class Code.

- Friendship Week – the school will run an annual bullying awareness week in October where various classes and events will be run to increase knowledge of what bullying is and what impact it can have.

Activities will be held on the theme in Art, Poetry, Prose and Drama. (See Friendship Week Policy)

- Anti-bullying posters will be made, discussed and displayed throughout the school.

- All staff will promote co-operation, sharing, friendship between all the children.
  Circle-time, class discussions on friendship (making friends, maintaining friendships, resolving conflict, responsibilities towards one another etc) will regularly take place in class.

- Additional lessons which deal specifically with bullying will be undertaken in each class e.g. PrimEd Bullying Series, with an emphasis on openness and discussion in this area. See school's "Restorative Practices Policy" (Areas covered will include –What is bullying? Forms of bullying. Cyber bullying. Why do people bully? Bystander bullies, Silent witnesses, Effects of bullying. How does bullying make me feel? What can we do? Preventing bullying, Coping with bullying etc).

- The whole school community will be encouraged to become a 'reporting school' whereby the whole school community are encouraged to report/speak out if they are being bullied or if they witness a bullying situation. (When children inform a teacher of a 'bullying situation' which occurred outside of school time, the teacher will advise the child to inform her parents. The child will be encouraged to as for their support in resolving the situation).

- Advice on bullying is in the Homework Journal given to each child every year. This informs children and parents what to do in a bullying situation.

- Discussion of the underlying principles of the school's Anti-bullying Policy and Code of Behaviour will be discussed at staff meetings.

- Where the opportunity arises, guest speakers with an expertise in the area of bullying-prevention, will be invited to address pupils, staff and parents.

- Prevention and awareness raising measures focusing on cyber-bullying by educating pupils on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while online (Webwise programme will be taught in 5th & 6th classes)

- Teachers can influence attitudes to bullying behaviour in a positive manner

- There are a number of curriculum components and programmes which are particularly relevant to the prevention of bullying and the promotion of respect for diversity and inclusiveness. The SPHE curriculum makes specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the inter-related areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships. The Stay Safe & RSE programmes at primary level are personal safety skills programmes which seek to enhance children's self-protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying. The Religious Education programme - Grow in Love emphasises respect for self and others. We use a Restorative Practice approach in dealing with conflict which helps to restore relationships.

- The work may be extended into many other areas such as Art, Drama and Physical Education. Co-operation and group enterprise can be promoted through team sports as well as through practical subjects.

  6. 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 outlined below.

The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame). With this is mind, the school's procedures are as follows:

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher(s) will exercise their professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred, what type if it has and how best the situation might be resolved.

- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher(s). 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.

- Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers, cleaners must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

- Parents 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.

- It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset.

- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.

- Initial investigations of bullying will be done in class where possible, but some incidents might be best 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(s) 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/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements.

- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher.

- Where the relevant teacher(s) has/have determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to her how she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy

- and efforts should be made to try to get her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.

- It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s).

- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher(s) that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken. The school should give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils.

- It must be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required that this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, her parents and the school.

- Follow up meetings with the relevant parties involved may be arranged separately with a view to bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.

- An additional follow up meeting with the parents of the children involved may take place after an appropriate time to ensure the matter has been resolved satisfactorily.

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

- In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their rights to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Recording

It is imperative that bullying incidences are recorded in an objective and factual manner. Noting and reporting of bullying behaviour is to be documented using the *Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour*. All records must be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour will adhere to the following:

While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher(s), the relevant teacher(s) will use their professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.

If it is established by the relevant teacher(s) that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher(s) 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.

The relevant teacher(s) must use the recording template at Appendix 3 to record the bullying behaviour and inform the Principal.

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying involves a whole school approach. Given the complexity of bullying behaviour, no one intervention/support programme works in all situations. Therefore, various approaches and intervention strategies may

be used including suggesting that parents seek referrals to appropriate outside agencies in order to receive further support for the pupils and their families if needed.

8. 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.

9. Prevention of Harassment

The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of pupils or staff or the harassment of pupils or staff on any of the nine grounds specified i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

10. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on Nov 22nd 2023.

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills and the patron if requested.

12. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department of Education and Skills.

Signed : Chairperson of Board of Management

Goretti Whelan

Date : 22/11/23

Signed : Principal

Yvonne Murphy

Date : 22/11/23

BOM Review of Anti Bullying Policy

The Board of Management (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 will be required.

	Yes /No
Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*?	Y
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	Y
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	Y
Is the Board satisfied that school staff is 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?	Y
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	Y
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	Y
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	Y
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	Y
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	Y
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	Y
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?	Y
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	N
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	N
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	N
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?	Y
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	N
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	NA

Chairperson: Goretti Whelan   Date Nov 22nd 2023

Principal : Y Murphy   Date Nov 22nd 2023

Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the anti-bullying policy

To: Parents & Guardians

The Board of Management of St Joseph's GNS wishes to inform you that:

o   The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of 22nd Nov 2023.

o   This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in **Appendix 4** of the Department's *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.*

Signed Goretti Whelan   Date Nov 22nd 2023
            Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed Yvonne Murphy   Date Nov 22nd 2023
            Principal

Record of 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))*

Pupil concerned	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

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

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
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.

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

UNDERSTANDING CYBER-BULLYING:

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

2.1.3. In addition, in the context of these procedures placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

WHAT IS CYBER-BULLYING?

There are many types of cyber-bullying. The more common types are:

1. **Text messages** – can be threatening or cause discomfort. Also included here is 'Bluejacking' (the sending of anonymous text messages over short distances using bluetooth wireless technology)

2. **Picture/video-clips via mobile phone cameras** – images sent to others to make the victim feel threatened or embarrassed

3. **Mobile phone calls** – silent calls, abusive messages or stealing the victim's phone and using it to harass others, to make them believe the victim is responsible

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

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

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

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

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

1. **'Flaming':** Online fights using electronic messages with angry and vulgar language
2. **'Harassment':** Repeatedly sending offensive, rude, and insulting messages
3. **'Cyber Stalking':** Repeatedly sending messages that include threats of harm or are highly intimidating or engaging in other on-line activities that make a person afraid for his or her own safety
4. '**Denigration':** 'Dissing' someone online. Sending or posting cruel gossip or rumors about a person to damage his or her reputation or friendships
5. **'Impersonation':** Pretending to be someone else and sending or posting material online that makes someone look bad, gets her/him in trouble or danger, or damages her/his reputation or friendships
6. '**Outing and Trickery':** Tricking someone into revealing secret or embarrassing information which is then shared online
7. '**Exclusion':** Intentionally excluding someone from an on-line group, like a 'buddy list'

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

AIMS OF POLICY:

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

PROCEDURES TO PREVENT CYBER-BULLYING:

- Staff, pupils, parents and Board of Management (BoM) will be made aware of issues surrounding cyber bullying through the use of appropriate awareness-raising exercises
- Pupils will learn about cyber bullying through Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), assemblies, friendship week activities and other curriculum projects
- The school will engage a speaker to facilitate a workshop on cyber bullying for 5th and 6th classes annually. Classes 1st to 6th will participate in the 'Bullying in a Cyber World' programme.
- Staff CPD (Continuous Professional Development) will assist in learning about current technologies
- Parents will be provided with information and advice on how to combat cyber bullying
- Pupils will sign an Acceptable Use of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) contract
- Parents will be expected to sign an Acceptable Use of ICT contract prior to enrolment and to discuss its meaning with their children
- Pupils and parents will be urged to report all incidents of cyber bullying to the school
- All reports of cyber bullying will be investigated, recorded, stored in the Principal's office and monitored regularly
- Procedures in our school Anti-Bullying Policy shall apply
- The police will be contacted in cases of actual or suspected illegal content
- This policy will be reviewed annually. Pupils, parents and staff will be involved in reviewing and revising this policy and any related school procedure.

INFORMATION FOR PUPILS:

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

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

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

Useful Websites

www.spunout.ie

www.kidsmart.org.uk/beingsmart

www.bbc.co.uk./schools/bullying

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

www.chatdanger.com

www.kidpower.org

www.childnet.int.org

www.antibullying.net

http://ie.reachout.com

www.abc.tcd.ie

www.sticksandstones.ie

This policy was reviewed and ratified by the Board on the 22nd Nov, 2023.

Signature Chairperson : Goretti Whelan

Date : 22/11/23