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. Fintan's High School 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 and wellbeing 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.

(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, by surveying Junior students each year (coordinated by Tutors and Year Head)

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 conduct, 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, transphobic 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.*

Examples of bullying behaviours (please note: this list is not exhaustive and is reviewed each year)

General behaviours which apply to all	- 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

	- The "look" - Invasion of personal space - A combination of any of the types listed. - Spreading rumours
Cyber	- Denigration: Spreading rumours, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation - Harassment: Continually AENding 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/Snapchat 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, queer, lesbian...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
		● The "look"
Sexual		● Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching
		● Harassment
Special Educational Needs (including gifted students), 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:

- Principal
- Deputy Principal
- Guidance Counsellor
- Year Head

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, 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 AENse of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.
> - Ongoing 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.
> - School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying.
> - 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.
> - Involvement of the prefects in contributing to a safe school environment.
> - Annual review of the Anti-Bullying code for the school which is included in student journals.
> - The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and a copy of the policy is shared all parent(s)/guardian(s) on the school app.
> - The implementation of regular whole school awareness measures, including periodic

surveys, assemblies, lessons preAENted through SPHE/RSE classes, Friendship Week
- 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.
- The development of an Acceptable Use Policy in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored, as is the pupils' use of mobile phones.
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell:
  - Direct approach to a teacher, year head, or tutor at an appropriate time, for example after class
  - Hand a note up with homework
  - Get a parent/guardian or friend to inform a teacher on your behalf
  - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.

Implementation of curricula
- The full implementation of the SPHE and CSPE curricula and the RSE Programme.
  - First Year – SPHE lessons on bullying
  - Second Year - FUSE anti-bullying campaign, On My Own Two Feet
  - Third Year – Fuse anti-bullying campaign
  - AENior RSE - incorporated into 'Mental Health' and 'Gender Studies' elements of the curriculum, as per NCCA guidelines
- Stand Up and Be You week
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- Delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes.
- Use of anti-bullying resources on sphe.ie and pdst.ie
- The school will specifically consider the additional needs of AEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.
- Links to other policies
  Code of Behaviour, Child Safeguarding Statement, Acceptable Use Policy, Mobile Phone Policy, SPHE Policy, Social Media Policy and Wellbeing Policy

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 as follows:

Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

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);

Reporting bullying behaviour

- 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 or Deputy Principal.
● Teaching and non-teaching staff such as Secretaries, Special Needs Assistants (SNAs), Caretaker, etc., must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

Investigating and dealing with incidents: Style of approach

● In investigating and dealing with 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 AENsitivity and with due regard to the rights of all 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.
● 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).
● 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 to discuss 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/her how he/she is in breach of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her 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 or her parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school.

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

- 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 Deputy Principal/Principal/Board of Management as appropriate.
- 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.

Investigating suspected bullying behaviour

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

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

Informal – investigating suspected bullying behaviour

- All reports of suspected bullying behaviour must be investigated and dealt with by a team made up of the Year Head, Deputy Principal and Principal
- The Year Head will record any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them and will summarise the information using the report template in Appendix 2 (Record of Investigation)
- If it is deemed that no bullying behaviour has occurred, this will be noted in Appendix 2 (Record of Investigation) and the report filed in the Principal's office.
- If it is clear that bullying type behaviour has occurred, the team of Year Head, Deputy Principal and Principal will decide, depending on the individual situation, whether to:

    (a) Proceed directly to the formal stage, i.e., 'Determination that bullying has occurred' or
    (b) Issue warnings to those involved, and their parents/guardians, that if further bullying type behaviour is repeated, the investigation will move to the Formal Stage and will be reported to the Board of Management. The Year Head will then monitor the situation to ensure that no further bullying behaviour is repeated and report back to the Deputy Principal/Principal.

Formal Stage - determination that bullying has occurred

- If it is established by the investigating team, made up of Year Head, Deputy Principal and Principal, that bullying has occurred, or that further bullying type behaviour has occurred despite a warning given, as outlined in (b) above, the Year Head must keep appropriate written records on the report template in Appendix 2 (Record of Investigation of Suspected Bullying), as outlined above, which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- The Year Head must file the Appendix 2 in the Principal's office.
- The Year head must also use the recording template at **Appendix 3** to record the bullying behaviour. This document will be stored in the safe in the Deputy Principal's office and presented at the next Board of Management meeting.

Established intervention strategies may include:

- Year Head/Deputy Principal/Principal interviews with all 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
- No Blame Approach
- Circle Time
- Restorative interventions
- Other intervention strategies as deemed suitable e.g. Ken Rigby Strategies http://www.bullyingawarenessweek.org/pdf/BullyingPreventionStrategiesinSchools%20Ken%20Rigby.pdf

7. 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. sports, clubs, societies, and other extra-curricular activities.

- Pastoral care system including:
  - Guidance Counselling services within the school
  - Prefect system
  - Tutor/Year Head system
  - Care Team
  - Prefect system
  - Supervision team
  - Group work/circle time such as is available in SPHE, Personal Development and RSE classes

- If pupils require counselling or further support, 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 or other relevant person.

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 15th November 2022 and will be reviewed annually.

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Council. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department 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' Council . A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Notice to Parents' Council of annual review of Anti- Bullying Policy

To:

The Board of Management of St. Fintan's High School wishes to inform you that:

• The Board of Management's Annual Review of the School's Anti-Bullying Policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of 15th November 2022

• The 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: _____ Date: _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: _____ Date:_____
Secretary, Board of Management

Record of Investigation of Suspected Bullying Behaviour

Student name		Class	
Investigated by		Date	
Details of alleged bullying incident			
Outline any key details as described by the student.			
Describe the outcome of this investigation, **as it applies to this student.** (sanctions etc.)			
Any further relevant information			

	Is it Bullying? (From PDST support materials)	Yes	No
1	Is the behaviour repeated? Only repeated incidents can be regarded as bullying. Once off incidents fall under the Code of Behaviour. However see 2 below		
2	Have there been any offensive or hurtful public messages or images placed on a social networking site or other public forum? Can the bullying image, statement or message be viewed or repeated by other people? NB: One such incident qualifies as cyber bullying.		
3	Is the behaviour planned?		
4	Is there unwanted negative behaviour inflicted on the victim?		
5	Is the unwanted negative behaviour of a physical, verbal or Psychological character?		
6	Is the behaviour inflicted by one person, or is there a group involved?		
7	Is the victim deliberately targeted?		
8	Do the behaviours involve deliberate exclusion, isolation, malicious gossip or other forms of relational aggression?		
9	Are the behaviours targeting an aspect of the victim's identity? For example physical, verbal or psychological aggression which is directed at their sexual orientation, their race, religion, ethnicity or traveller background.		
10	Are the behaviours targeting the victim because they have Special Educational Needs?		
11	Is this investigation proceeding to Formal Stage – Determination that Bullying has occurred?		
12	Has it been decided by the investigation team, made up of Year Head, Deputy Principal and Principal, that it is better to give a warning to all parties before proceeding to 'Formal Stage – Determination that Bullying has occurred' and to monitor the situation? Please note, any warning must emphasise that if this bullying type behaviour is repeated, the case will proceed to 'Formal Stage – Determination that Bullying has occurred' and will be reported to the Board of Management.		

Appendix 3 Template for recording bullying behaviour and reporting to Board of Management (to be stored in the safe in the Deputy Principal's Office)

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	

5. Location of incidents (tick

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other	

4. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern

5. 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/AEN 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.