Anti-Cyber Bulling Policy

St. Patrick's N.S. Crowenstown 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.

Cyber bullying

Cyber bullying includes (but is not limited to) communicating via electronic means with the objective of causing hurt, fear, embarrassment, humiliation, alarm and/or distress to one or more persons.

Cyber bullying includes the use of mobile phones and the internet with the objective of upsetting someone.

It may take the form of general insults or impersonation, defamation or prejudice-based bullying.

Unlike other forms of bullying a once-off posting can constitute bullying.

While bullying involves a repetition of unwelcome behaviour the **Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools, September 2013,** states that *"…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."*

While this policy addresses issues related to cyber bullying of students (i.e. situations in which one or more students are the victim[s] of bullying) the policy also applies to teaching and other school staff.

This policy applies to activities and events that take place during school time.

St. Patrick's National School reserves the right to take action against bullying perpetrated outside the school which spills over into the school.

Key measures to combat cyber bullying

- This Anti-Cyber Bullying Policy
- Students will be informed about cyber bullying in the course of their education at the school.
- Serious cyber bullying issues may be reported to the Gardaí.
- Teachers/facilitator will dedicate a standalone lesson to deal with the issue of cyber bullying bi-annually to pupils from 3rd -6th class
- Students and staff are expected to comply with the school's policy on the use of computers in the School. (Acceptable use of the Internet Policy).
- Parents will be provided with information and advice on cyber bullying. Parents and students are advised via this policy that it is illegal for a child under 13 to register with and use Facebook.
- There are also restrictions on many other social media sites

- Pupils are not permitted to have mobile phones in school
- Teachers will investigate, record and report all incidents of cyber bullying.
- St. Patrick's National School endeavours to block access to inappropriate web sites, using firewalls, antivirus protection and filtering systems. Furthermore no pupil is allowed to work on the internet in the classroom without a member of staff present.
- If pupils engage in bullying, sanctions will be applied as per *Code of 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 and Ask.fm– 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 rumours 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

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.

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 or race.

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), IT/ class discussion and from parents

- The school will engage a speaker to facilitate a workshop on cyber bullying for pupils in 3rd to 6th class bi-annually
- 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
- Parents will sign an Acceptable Use of the Internet permission slip.
- Pupils will sign an Acceptable Use of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) contract.
- Pupils, teachers and parents will be urged to report all incidents of cyber bullying to the school
- All reports of cyber bullying will be investigated, recorded and monitored regularly
- The Gardaí may be contacted in cases of cyber bullying

Procedures in the *Code of Behaviour* will be followed to deal with cases of Cyber bullying. Sanctions for children engaging in cases of Cyber Bullying are the same for any type of bullying within the school. See Code of Behaviour sections on Consequence sheets, Suspension and Expulsion.

Information for Pupils

If you are being bullied by phone or the Internet;

- Remember, bullying is never your fault. It can be stopped and 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
- Never give out your personal details online. If you are in a chat room, watch what you say about where you live, the school you go to, your email address etc. All these details can help someone who wants to harm you build up a picture about you.
- Keep and save any bullying emails, text messages or images These can be shown to a teacher or parent as evidence
- If you can, make a note of the time and date the bullying messages or images were sent and any details about the sender.

Text /Video Messaging

- You can 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 that you have changed your number
- If the bullying persists you may have to change your number. Your mobile service provider will help with this

- Never reply to abusive or worrying texts. Your mobile provider service will have a number for you to ring or text to report phone bullying
- Don't delete messages from cyber bullies. You don't have to read them but you should keep them as evidence

Useful websites

www.webwise.ie   **www.childnet.int.org**

www.spunout.ie   **www.kidsmart.org.uk/beingsmart**

www.antibullying.net   **www.chatdanger.com**

www.bbc.co.uk/schools/bullying   **www.sticksandstones.ie**

This policy was ratified and has been implemented since 2014. It was reviewed by the Board of Management in 2016, 2018 NS 2020.

This review was ratified at a Board of Management meeting on 11th November 2021

Signed _____ Chairperson

Date _____

Signed _____Principal

Date _____