



Presentation Senior School

"A community of learners inspired by the vision and values of Nano Nagle"

Anti-Bullying Policy

Presentation Senior School is a Catholic school and all children, staff and visitors are encouraged and helped to follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ who said **"Treat others as you would like them to treat you"**. The founder of the Presentation Order, Venerable Nano Nagle, also inspires us to live out the words of Jesus Christ in our daily lives. The child-friendly painting of Nano Nagle and her motto, 'Not Words, but Deeds', displayed in the front foyer of the building continually reminds us of our school's Catholic ethos and value system. In line with this ethos and value system, it is imperative that we create a positive school culture (see appendix 2) where the core values of **respect, empathy, trust and integrity**, are implicitly and explicitly modelled for the children who come to work, learn and play in our school each day.

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 Presentation Senior 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 and available in the Parent/Guardian section of the Presentation Mullingar website.

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

1. A positive school culture and climate which-
 - a. Is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
 - b. Encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
 - c. Promotes respectful relationships across the school community
2. Effective leadership
3. A school-wide approach
4. A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact
5. 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
6. Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils
7. Supports for staff
8. Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies)
9. On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy



Definition of Bullying

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:

1. Deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
2. Cyber-bullying and
3. 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.

The following are some of the types of bullying behaviour that can occur amongst pupils:

1. **Physical aggression:** This behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While pupils often engage in 'mess fights', they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.
2. **Intimidation:** Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation: it may be based on the use of very aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon. Particularly upsetting can be a facial expression which conveys aggression and/or dislike.
3. **Isolation/exclusion and other relational bullying:** This occurs where a certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or all of the class group. This practice is usually initiated by the person engaged in bullying behaviour and can be difficult to detect. It may be accompanied by writing insulting remarks about the pupil in public places, by passing around notes about or drawings of the pupil or by whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard. Relational bullying occurs when a person's attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. One of the most common forms includes control: "Do this or I won't be your friend anymore"(implied or stated); a group ganging up against one person (girl or boy); non-verbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumours about a person or giving them the "silent treatment".
4. **Cyber-bullying:** This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, e-mail, instant messaging (IM), apps, gaming sites, chat-rooms and other online technologies. Being the target of inappropriate or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying. As cyber-bullying uses technology to perpetrate bullying behaviour and does not require face-to-face contact, cyber-bullying can occur at any time (day or night). Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyber-bullying. For example, a target may be sent homophobic text messages or pictures may be posted with negative comments about a person's sexuality, appearance etc.
5. **Name-calling:** Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) which

hurts, insults or humiliates should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name-calling of this type refers to physical appearance, e.g., size or clothes worn. Accent or distinctive voice characteristics may attract negative attention. Academic ability can also provoke name calling. This tends to operate at two extremes. There are those who are singled out for attention because they are perceived to be weak academically. At the other extreme there are those who, because they are perceived as high achievers, are also targeted.

6. **Damage to property:** Personal property can be the focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, school books and other learning material. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.
7. **Extortion:** Demands for money may be made, often accompanied by threats (sometimes carried out in the event of the targeted pupil not delivering on the demand). A pupil may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to another who is engaged in bullying behaviour.

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.

Teachers responsible for investigating and dealing with bullying

The class teacher and/or principal teacher is responsible for investigating and dealing with reported incidents of bullying. Two adults, if possible, will be present when a child or children are being questioned in relation to alleged acts of bullying. One adult will take responsibility for ensuring that the child has been treated fairly and given adequate opportunity to respond to the questions asked by the teacher investigating the allegations.

Education and Prevention Strategies

The education and prevention strategies the school will implement to counteract bullying include the following:

1. All staff will promote and model the school's four key values: **Respect, Empathy, Trust and Integrity**. Teachers will help the children to understand and explore these values through Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE) lessons.
2. Every effort will be made, through curricular and extra-curricular programmes, to provide pupils with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth.
3. The Stay Safe Programme, taught in all classes in our school each year, is a personal safety skills programme which seeks to enhance children's self-protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying. As part of the Stay Safe

Programme, lessons pertaining to Anti-Bullying will be taught in all classes each year. Lessons will focus on developing pupils' awareness and understanding of bullying including its causes and effects. The anti-bullying lessons in the Stay Safe programme will be extended by each teacher to include identity-based bullying.

4. Bullying prevention and awareness measures will focus on educating pupils on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe on-line and also on developing a culture of reporting any concerns about cyber-bullying. The following resources, pertaining to Internet safety, will be made available on the school website – www.presentationmullingar.ie
 1. A copy of this Anti-Bullying Policy document
 2. Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools published by the Department of Education and Skills
 3. Get With It – A Guide to Cyber Bullying published by the Office for Internet Safety – www.internetsafety.ie
 4. Get With It – A Parents' Guide to New Media Technologies published by the Office for Internet Safety – www.internetsafety.ie
 5. EU Kids Online – Final Report
5. Approaches to decreasing the likelihood of bullying for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) include improving inclusion, focusing on developing social skills, paying attention to key moments such as transitioning from primary to post-primary and cultivating a good school culture which has respect for all and helping one another as central.
6. Staff will always be encouraged to contribute towards the development of a sense of community within their own classroom and throughout the school to:
 - Promote the value of diversity
 - Address prejudice and stereotyping
 - Highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour

Procedure for Investigation of Bullying Behaviour

The following procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying will be followed by all members of the school community:

1. All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the class teacher and/or principal teacher. In that way, pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It will 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. When alleged perpetrators of bullying are being questioned as part of an investigation, another adult will be present to ensure that the child being questioned is treated fairly and given adequate opportunity to respond to the questions asked.
2. The principal teacher will be informed of all reports of bullying and he/she will make a record of those reports in the bullying file stored in his/her office. Before it is confirmed that bullying has occurred, alleged perpetrators will be referred to by their registration numbers/name initials only.
3. Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners will report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the principal teacher.

4. The class-teacher and/or principal teacher will investigate a reported incident of bullying behaviour. The primary aim for the class-teacher/principal teacher in investigating and dealing with the 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.
5. In investigating and dealing with bullying, the class-teacher and/or principal teacher will exercise her/his professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
6. Parents/guardians and pupils will be 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.
7. The class teacher and/or principal teacher investigating bullying behaviour will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents/guardians.
8. Incidents will generally be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
9. All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved may be asked for information in relation to an incident or set of incidents.
10. When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the class-teacher and/or principal teacher will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This will be done in a calm manner that sets an example for children in relation to appropriate methods for dealing effectively with conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
11. If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved will be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member will be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements.
12. Each member of a group will be supported through the possible pressures that they may face them from the other members of the group after an interview with a teacher.
13. Individuals may be asked to provide written information in relation to bullying incidents in the school.
14. In cases where it has been determined by the class-teacher and/or principal teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents/guardians of the parties involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and to explain the actions being taken by the school and how they can assist their child to avoid further incidents of bullying behaviour. If the principal teacher has not been involved in the investigation up to this point, he/she will be informed of the outcome of the investigation by the class-teacher. The principal, in collaboration with the class-teacher, will carry out all of the remaining steps in this procedure.
15. The principal will complete the form in **Appendix 3**.
16. Where the class teacher and/or principal teacher has determined that a pupil has engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts will be made to help her/him to see the situation from the perspective of the victim. **A student's failure to immediately cease bullying behaviour may be viewed by the principal teacher as a**

serious risk to the safety of others. The school's code of behaviour specifically states that an immediate suspension is warranted when: "The safety of the other children, staff or visitors to the school is compromised by the student's behaviour".

17. It will be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) by the principal teacher that, in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school.
18. 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 victim of bullying is ready and agreeable. This can have a therapeutic effect.
19. In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed, the class teacher and the principal teacher must, as part of their professional judgement, take the following factors into account:
 - a. Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
 - b. Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
 - c. Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable; and
 - d. Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal;
20. 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 procedures which is published on the school website.
21. 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 right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Simplified Version of the procedure for children

1. ***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.***
2. Children must ensure that an incident of bullying is reported to the class-teacher on the day on which it occurs. Children must give an accurate account of the incident(s) they report. Incidents which occur in the yard should be reported, in the first instance, to the supervising teacher and then reported again to the class-teacher.
3. The class-teacher will investigate reported incident(s) of bullying by asking **what, why, where, when, and who** questions.
4. The principal teacher will be informed of all reports of bullying. He/she will keep a record of the reports.
5. If bullying behaviour has occurred the class-teacher and/or the principal teacher will make a record of it and contact the parents/guardians of those involved.
6. A student who is unwilling or unable to stop bullying behaviour immediately will be suspended by the principal teacher.

Record Keeping Procedures for Investigations into Bullying Behaviour

1. All reports of alleged bullying will be reported to the principal and recorded by him/her using the template form in Appendix 1. Completed forms will be stored in the bullying file in the principal's office. When completing the form, alleged perpetrators of bullying will be referred to by their registration number only.
2. Written/typed records will be kept for all investigations into reports of bullying behaviour. The class-teacher and/or principal investigating bullying behaviour will use her/his professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept pertaining to the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding the bullying behaviour. Copies of these notes will be stored in the bullying file in the principal's office. The pupil files of each child referred to in the notes will contain a record stating the date on which records relating to bullying incidents have been filed in the bullying file in the principal's office.
3. If it is established by the class-teacher and/or principal teacher that bullying has occurred, the principal teacher will complete the form contained in appendix 3. A copy of the completed form in Appendix 3 will be stored in the bullying file in the principal's office. A copy will also be stored on the student file of each pupil referred to on the form.

Referral of Serious Cases to the Health Service Executive (HSE)

Serious instances of bullying behaviour will, in accordance with the Children First and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, be referred to the HSE Children and Family Services and/or the Gardai as appropriate.

Supports for Pupils Affected by Bullying

The following supports will be provided for pupils affected by bullying:

1. Opportunities will be provided for pupils who have been bullied to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience. Examples of such opportunities include:
 - a. Helping the staff and children in the special class (Room 14)
 - b. Carrying out messages/tasks for teachers
 - c. Participation in after-school activities e.g. Sport, Choir, Enrichment Group and ICT Club
 - d. Participation in cookery lessons
2. Children who have been involved in bullying behaviour may be referred to the Family Support worker who will provide additional support in the area of Social Personal and Health Education (SPHE). The Family Support Worker may use the SALT Programme (Stop, Ask, Listen, Talk) to explore effective strategies for conflict resolution.
3. Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour will be encouraged to discuss it with their teachers as recommended in *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* published by the DES.

Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils

Appropriate supervision 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 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.

Communication of Policy Document

This policy will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parent/Guardian Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the DES and Most Reverend Bishop Michael Smith (School Patron) if requested.

Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed at a Board of Management meeting in autumn 2014 or at an earlier time if, as per the school's policy on policy formation, a request is made for a review by members of the school community. The checklist in appendix 4 will be used to guide the review process. If areas for improvement are identified, an action plan will be put in place to address the issues of concern. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parent/Guardian Association. The standardised notification that will be used for this purpose is included in appendix five of this policy document. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the school Patron and/or the Department of Education and Skills (DES).

Ratification of Policy

This policy was adopted and ratified by the Board of Management on 21st March 2017.

Appendix 1: Record of Reported Incident of Bullying

Reported By:	Date:
Reported To:	Date:
Names of Alleged Victim(s):	
Registration Numbers of Alleged Perpetrators(s):	
Details of Alleged Bullying:	
Report completed by:	Date:

Appendix 2

Appendix 3

Appendix 4

Appendix 5: Notification regarding the Board of Management’s annual review of the anti-bullying policy

To: _____

The Board of Management of Presentation Senior 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 _____ [date].

This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in Appendix 4 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools published by the Department of Education and Skills.

Signed: _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date: _____

Signed: _____
Principal

Date: _____