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 Laurence O'Toole's CBS 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-(see Appendix 1)

     o is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
     o encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
     o 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-
     o build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
     o 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:**

   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 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 teachers for investigating dealing with bullying are as follows:**

   o Class Teacher: deals with the initial allegation/suspicion of bullying behaviour.
   o Principal: The Principal will be involved where bullying behaviour is suspected by the class teacher.

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:**

- A Restorative Practice approach is being promoted in the school. Including the principal and the deputy principal a number of teachers and SNAs in the school have done restorative practice training.
- A comprehensive SPHE plan where the topic of bullying and how to deal with it will be covered by each class during the year.
- Programmes such as Stay Safe and Walk Tall are followed in the school.
- Raising an awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour throughout the school (through assembly, circle time, novel exploration, drama…etc)
- An Anti – bullying motto will be displayed in every classroom and throughout the school.
- Pupils are divided into 5 separate yards based on their class groupings, thereby giving them opportunities to develop age appropriate relationships.
- The school has an Acceptable Use of ICT policy which pupils, parents and staff are expected to follow.
- Pupils in 5th class will receive a talk on cyber bullying from the Community Garda each year.
- Where possible the pupils of 5th and 6th classes will participate in a workshop on cyber bullying.
- Parents will be provided with information and advice on how to combat cyber bullying.
- Assemblies will be used to promote positive behaviour and to highlight areas such as bullying that may need to be addressed.
- St Laurence O'Toole's CBS is an inclusive school catering for pupils from various cultures and ethnic backgrounds. Diversity is celebrated in the school during our Multi Cultural Day.

6. **The school's procedures for investigating, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows (see Section 6.8 0f Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):**

All incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported will be investigated and recorded on the standard Recording Bullying Behaviour Form (see Appendix 2). This will be done by the relevant teacher and where deemed necessary the Principal will be involved.

- The primary aim of the relevant teacher 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.
- All reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with appropriately, thus showing how serious bullying is taken in the school and highlighting the importance of reporting incidents of bullying.
- Non-teaching staff must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or reported to them, to the relevant teacher.
- Parental input and co-operation is important in investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying.
- 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.

Investigating an incident of Bullying:

- All interviews will take place outside the classroom with due regard to child protection measures.
- The pupils involved will be asked to write their accounts of events.
- The incident will be discussed individually with the pupils involved and a record will be kept (see Appendix 3; Incident Record Sheet).
- If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually first, and thereafter they should be met as a group.
- If it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the relevant parties should be contacted. Action being taken and the reasons for it will be explained and they will be given an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school.
- Appropriate sanctions (as per the school's Discipline/Behaviour Policy) will be given to the pupil found to be bullying following the investigations.

Follow up:

- Follow-up meetings with the two parties will be arranged to ascertain if the issues have been resolved.
- Information regarding any past bullying incidents will be passed on to the new teacher at the beginning of each new school year.
- Where a report of bullying has been investigated the relevant teacher will keep a written record of the incident (see appendix 3)
- Supports will be put in place to support the bully and the victim. Where the school feels an individual needs specific support from outside agencies (eg counselling, NEPS..etc) it will endeavour to provide it.
- This policy will be reviewed annually with amendments made to reflect any changes in approach deemed necessary.

7. **The school's Programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows (see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):**

- The relevant teacher will assure the victim of bullying that they did the right thing by telling.
- The pupils involved in the bullying incident (victim and bully) will be monitored to ensure they are coping.
- Bullying will be dealt with in various guises (SPHE Programme, assemblies, workshops, etc…).
- An emphasis will be put on promoting positive behaviour and boosting the self-esteem of all pupils in the school, including those involved in bullying incidents.
- If it is the view of the principal that the child would benefit from professional counselling, they will be referred to the appropriate outside agencies, following consultation with the parents/guardians.

8. **Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils:**

The Board of Management of St. Laurence O'Toole's CBS 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 of St Laurence O'Toole's CBS confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligation under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent sexual 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. **Adoption Date of |Policy:**

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management of St Laurence O'Toole's on 24 January, 2014

11. **Availability of Policy:**

This policy has been made available to school personnel, and provided to the Parents' Association. A hardcopy of the policy will be made available to parents, The Department and the patron if requested.

12. **Review of Policy:**

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 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.

Signed: _____   Signed: _____

      (Chairperson of Board of Management)   (Principal)

Date of Review:_____