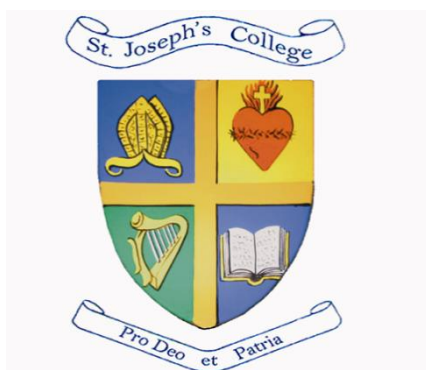# St. Joseph's Patrician College, Galway.

'THE BISH'

Anti-Bullying Policy

Ratification Date: May 2014

Review Date: May 2017

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the Code of Responsibility and Behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of St. Joseph's Patrician College has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall Code of Responsibility and 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. St. Joseph's College 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:

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:
   - **Physical aggression**: This behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault.

- **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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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 or interference with a pupil's locker or bicycle. 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.
- **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.

The various types of bullying listed above are described in further detail in Appendix 2

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 Responsibility and 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 Responsibility and Behaviour (Appendix 1).

4. The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:

- St. Joseph's College acknowledges the significant role of all staff members in the promotion of a positive whole-school environment. All staff members are also significant stakeholders in targeting bullying behaviour.

- The relevant teacher will come from a team comprising of Senior Management, Year Heads and Guidance Counsellors. This group will undertake the role of the relevant teacher and will investigate and deal with incidents of bullying on a case by case basis. Senior Management may designate a teacher from outside this group to be the relevant teacher, if deemed appropriate.

- Each relevant teacher will be supported in his/her work by teachers from the S.P.H.E. and Guidance Counselling departments. Staff from these departments may have discussed bullying incidents and/or disclosures with victims and/or perpetrators. As a result they may provide additional insight and information to the relevant teacher investigating.

- St. Joseph's College also highlights the role of individual teachers in reporting any concerns they may have about bullying incidents. It is recommended that staff liaise with the relevant teacher for each year group when reporting concerns about bullying.

- The Board of Management advises that members of school staff have sufficient familiarity with the school's anti bullying policy. Such familiarity enables staff to effectively and consistently apply the policy when required. Such supports for staff should be appropriate to the individual's role and should enable staff to recognise bullying, implement effective strategies for preventing bullying and where appropriate, intervene effectively in bullying cases.

- St. Joseph's College will disperse the school's anti-bullying policy to all staff.

- The Board of Management also makes appropriate arrangements to ensure that temporary and substitute staff have sufficient awareness of the school's Code of Responsibility and Behaviour and its anti-bullying policy. Such arrangements include an induction meeting for temporary and substitute staff where they are furnished with relevant codes and policies.

5. The education and prevention strategies that will be used by the school are as follows:

St. Joseph's College implements a range of strategies that endeavour to target bullying both in the classroom and whole-school context.
- The implementation of regular whole school awareness measures. For example: annual Anti - Bullying week undertaken by the S.P.H.E. (Social, Personal and Health Education) department both in class and throughout the school.
- The discussion of bullying is supplemented in other subjects such as English, C.S.P.E., Geography, History, Religious Education and Physical Education where curricular content applies appropriately to the issue. Teachers participate by completing in-class work that deals sensitively with the issue of bullying. Pupils are encouraged to support one another and be aware of how their behaviour, both verbal and physical, can affect others in school and in the wider community.
- Staff members in St. Joseph's College promote co-operation and group enterprise through team sports, school clubs and societies as well as through practical subjects. The wide range of sporting activities provided to pupils provides excellent opportunities for learning how to control aggression.
- Junior classes attend weekly S.P.H.E. classes which incorporate the discussion of bullying and how best to pre-empt its occurrence. Pupils learn about the various types of bullying (cyber, homophobic etc.) and how to report incidents of bullying as they arise.
- Junior students are also surveyed once a term to investigate prevalence rates of bullying, identify classes that require specific intervention and provide opportunity to pupils to share any concerns they may have.
- St. Joseph's College has participated in Educational Psychology research investigating the prevalence of cyber-bullying among pupils. Results of this

research are pending. Such research aims to identify the significance of various types of cyber-bullying which will guide forthcoming interventions.

- As part of this research pupils and parents were furnished with information booklets that provide advice on how best to stay safe online and support contacts that can be utilised if pupils are victimised by others while online (See appendix 3 and 4). St. Joseph's College will also provide cyber-bullying workshops for pupils and their parents. These workshops aim to raise awareness and promote positive online behaviour among students and parents.

- Buddy and other student support activities can help to support vulnerable children, and encourage a culture of peer support.These activities may be co-ordinated by school prefects and /or Student Council.

- Training will be provided for teachers on resolving bullying; internet safety and cyber bullying; sexual orientation and homophobia. This training will be facilitated during Croke Park hours.

- Parents are advised of their responsibility in supervising social media sites outside school. Pupils do not have access to these sites at school. Parents are expected to be aware that there is an age restriction on the use of these sites. This advice will be dispersed via a formal school letter sent to parents at the beginning of the school year.

- In attempting to prevent bullying, St. Joseph's College takes particular account of the needs of pupils with disabilities or with SEN and ensures that all the services that provide for such pupils work together. Approaches to decreasing the likelihood of bullying for pupils with 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 taking care of one another as central.

Staff members of St. Joseph's College aim to create an environment that promotes positive behaviour and supports students who experience bullying behaviour. Staff endeavour to:
- Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.
- Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.
- Catch pupils being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN.
- Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school Code of Responsibility and Behaviour.
- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.
- Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school Acceptable Use Policy regarding mobile phone and internet use. Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the policy.

- Actively involve parents and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media.
- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.
- Highlight and explicitly teach school Code of Responsibility and Behaviour in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.
- Actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- Ensure adequate school yard supervision is available.
- Liaise with pupils to identify bullying "hot spots" and "hot times" for bullying in the school. Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas, changing rooms, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision. Hot times tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when pupils are in the playground/school yard or moving classrooms.
- Support the work of the school student council which liaises with an assigned staff member. This staff member relays the opinions of the student council to staff and senior management.
- Supervise and monitor 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.
- Ensure that students know who to tell and how to tell.

New school entrants are supported as follows:
- Copies of the Anti-Bullying Policy will be made available to all new parents via the school website.
- During the induction evening for new pupils, parents will be informed about bullying :
  - the standards of behaviour expected from children in the school
  - what action the parents should take if their child is being bullied,
  - what action the parents should take if told that their child has engaged in bullying behaviour.

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: A pupil or parent may bring a bullying concern to any teacher in the school. Individual teachers must take appropriate measures regarding reports of bullying behaviour in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy.

It should be noted that St. Joseph's College has the capacity to investigate incidents of bullying that occur during school hours only. Incidents of bullying that occur out of school hours e.g. Cyber-bullying, are not within the remit of school anti-bullying policy. However, incidents of bullying that lead to further bullying within the school setting may be investigated.

Procedures for investigating Bullying
- Teachers respond sensitively to pupils who disclose incidents of bullying and investigate all disclosed incidents of bullying;
- Answers will be sought to the questions of what, where, when, who and why;
- Investigation is usually carried out outside the classroom to ensure confidentiality.
- If a group of children are involved, it is normal practice to first interview each one individually. Then the group as a whole meets and each member is asked for his

account of what happened to ensure that everyone is clear about what everyone else has said;

- Pupils who are not directly involved may be asked for information if deemed appropriate;
- If a child reports electronic bullying, parents are informed.
- These procedures are outlined in further detail in Appendix 6 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Procedures for recording bullying behaviour

The Board of Management of St. Joseph's Collegeprovides clear procedures for the formal noting and reporting of bullying behaviour. All records are maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour adhere to the following guidelines:

- The relevant teacher will keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- The relevant teacher will use the recording template (Appendix 5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*)to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:
- The recording template will be completed in full and retained by the relevant teacher. A copy will be provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.
- St. Joseph's College acknowledges that in certain cases it may be necessary for the school to seek the assistance of other local persons and formal agencies such as NEPS, HSE social workers, community workers, Gardaí etc.
- At least once in every school term, the Principal will provide a report to the Board of Management setting out the overall number of bullying cases reported (by means of the bullying recording template Appendix 5 of the*Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*) since the previous report to the Board. The Principal will also provide confirmation that all cases referred to have been or are being, dealt with in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy and the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools*.

- The minutes of the Board of Management meeting will record the above but will not include any identifying details of the pupils involved.

Referral of serious cases to the HSE

In relation to bullying in schools, *Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011* (Children First) and the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* provide that in situations where "the incident is serious and where the behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive, the school must consult the HSE Children and Family Social Services with a view to drawing up an appropriate response, such as a management plan".

Serious instances of bullying behaviour should, 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 Gardaí as appropriate.

The *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* also provide that where school personnel have concerns about a child but are not sure whether to report the matter to the HSE, the Designated Liaison Person must seek advice from the HSE Children and Family Social Services.

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows
- Individual counselling for students where appropriate.
- Group work such as circle time where appropriate.
- Consistent monitoring of victims and perpetrators as appropriate.

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. This policy will reflect the Charter for Dignity at Work and the Health, Safety and Welfare at Work Act.

10. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management in May 2014.

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 and Le Cheile Schools' Trust 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.

Signed: _____ Signed: _____
(Chairperson of Board of Management)   (Principal)

Date: _____   Date: _____

Date of next review: _____

The Code of Responsibility and Behaviour may be inserted here or accessed and downloaded from the school website www.bish.ie.

Appendix 2: Types of Bullying defined in detail(May be subject to further clarificationsgoing forward)

- **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.

- **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.

- **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".

- **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.

- **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.

- **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 or interference with a pupil's locker or bicycle. 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.

- **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.

Appendix 3 Template for recording 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*   4. Location of incidents *

Pupil Concerned	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other	

*(Tick relevant box(es))

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 _____

Appendix 6: Procedures for Investigating Bullying

The school's procedures must be consistent with the following:

(i) The primary aim for 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 (rather than to apportion blame);

(ii) In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;

(iii) <u>All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.</u> 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;

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

(v) 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;

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

(vii) <u>Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach</u> when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents;

(viii) <u>Incidents</u> are generally <u>best investigated outside the classroom</u> situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;

(ix) 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;

(x) 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;

(xi) 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;

(xii) Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher;

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

(xiv) In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher 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 (by reference to the school policy). 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;

(xv) 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;

(xvi) It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his parents and the school. Sanctions, where necessary, will be in line with the school's Code of Responsibility and Behaviour.

(xvii) Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable. This can have a therapeutic effect;

(xviii) In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded by the relevant teacher in the recording template at Appendix 5

(xix) 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; and

- Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal;

(xx) 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;

(xxi) 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.