

# St Declan's NS Anti-Bullying Policy

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**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 Declans NS 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 main aims of this anti bullying policy are**

- To create a positive school culture and climate that is inclusive and welcoming of difference.
- To create a school climate which is open, supportive and encourages pupils to disclose and discuss bullying behaviour.
- To raise awareness amongst the entire school community {including school management, teachers, pupils parents and volunteers etc.} that bullying is unacceptable behaviour.
- To ensure comprehensive supervision and monitoring through which all aspects of school activity are kept under observation.
- To provide procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying behaviour.
- To provide procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour.
- To develop a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour.
- To work with and through the various local agencies in countering all forms of bullying and anti-social behaviour, and
- To facilitate ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the school's anti bullying policy.

**3. 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 9 key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

1. A positive school culture and climate which..{refer also to Table A and Table B }

- 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.

2. Effective leadership

- The principal along with other leaders and staff within the school will strive to engender an ethos under which bullying is unacceptable.
- All staff will be careful to act as good role models while parents will be made aware of their responsibility to model the standard of behaviour the pupils are asked to respect.

3. A school-wide approach

- The management, staff, parents and pupils all have a role to play to prevent and address bullying behaviour.
- In certain cases, it may be necessary for the school to seek the assistance of formal agencies such as NEPS, HSE social workers. Community workers, na Gardaí etc.
- Consideration will be given to organising an "Awareness Day" for parents, pupils and staff each year.

- The Parents Association will be requested every second year to arrange a speaker to discuss the issue of cyber bullying and social media with parents.
4. A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact.
    - At the beginning of each school year, all staff will be reminded of the definition and reporting procedures within the school.
    - Also at the beginning of each school year, parents too will be reminded of the definition of bullying and the role they can play in bullying prevention.
    - Finally, at the beginning of each school year, it will be explained to all classes at “Assembly” what is meant by bullying, their role in prevention and how to report incidents of bullying to staff.
  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 including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
    - These are listed below.
  6. Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils.
    - Adequate and appropriate supervision will be provided throughout the school day.
    - Supervision will be proactive in order to prevent or monitor incidents of bullying.
    - All staff will stay with their class during activities provided by outside facilitators.
  7. Supports for staff.
  8. Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
  9. On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

**4. 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.

**Note:** 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* }

**This is a non-exhaustive list of examples of bullying behaviours.**

<p><b>General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc.</li> <li>• Physical aggression</li> <li>• Damage to property</li> <li>• Name calling</li> <li>• Slagging</li> <li>• The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person</li> <li>• Offensive graffiti</li> <li>• Extortion</li> <li>• Intimidation</li> <li>• Insulting or offensive gestures</li> <li>• The “look”</li> <li>• Invasion of personal space</li> <li>• A combination of any of the types listed.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cyber</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Denigration:</b> Spreading rumors, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation</li> <li>• <b>Harassment:</b> Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual</li> <li>• <b>Impersonation:</b> Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name</li> <li>• <b>Flaming:</b> Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight</li> <li>• <b>Trickery:</b> Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online</li> <li>• <b>Outing:</b> Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images</li> <li>• <b>Exclusion:</b> Purposefully excluding someone from an online group</li> <li>• <b>Cyber stalking:</b> Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety</li> <li>• Silent telephone/mobile phone call</li> <li>• Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls</li> <li>• Abusive text messages</li> <li>• Abusive email</li> <li>• Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/ Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles</li> <li>• Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures</li> <li>• Abusive posts on any form of communication technology</li> </ul>
<p><b>Identity Based Behaviours</b>  <b>Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation</b> (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).</p>	

<b>Homophobic and Transgender</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Spreading rumours about a person’s sexual orientation</li> <li>• Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation</li> <li>• Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian...used in a derogatory manner</li> <li>• Physical intimidation or attacks</li> <li>• Threats</li> </ul>
<b>Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background</li> <li>• Exclusion on the basis of any of the above</li> </ul>
<b>Relational</b>	<p>This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Malicious gossip</li> <li>• Isolation &amp; exclusion</li> <li>• Ignoring</li> <li>• Excluding from the group</li> <li>• Taking someone’s friends away</li> <li>• “Bitching”</li> <li>• Spreading rumours</li> <li>• Breaking confidence</li> <li>• Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear</li> <li>• The “look”</li> <li>• Use or terminology such as ‘nerd’ in a derogatory way</li> </ul>
<b>Sexual</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching</li> <li>• Harassment</li> </ul>
<b>Special Educational Needs, Disability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name calling</li> <li>• Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs</li> <li>• Taking advantage of some pupils’ vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying</li> <li>• Taking advantage of some pupils’ vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues.</li> <li>• Mimicking a person’s disability</li> <li>• Setting others up for ridicule</li> </ul>

**5. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating** and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows – the class teacher.

**6. 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

<b>Education and prevention strategies</b>
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| <p><b>School-wide approach</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.</li> <li>• A discussion with both 6<sup>th</sup> classes will be conducted before June 2014 to gather information</li> </ul> |
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regarding possible hot spots for bullying behaviour within the school.

- 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 sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.
- The school will endeavour to provide CPD on anti-bullying behaviour during Croke Park hours between Sept 2014 to June 2016.
- 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.
- Promotion of an Anti-Bullying behaviour will be done using posters displayed in common areas of the school.
- Promotion of Anti Bullying behaviour will also be done as assembly time.
- Encourage a culture of reporting, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'reporting'. 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.
- Ensuring that pupils know who to report and how to report, e.g.:
  - Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
  - Hand note up with homework.
  - Make a phone call to the school or to a trusted teacher in the school.
  - Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
  - Administer a confidential questionnaire when necessary.
  - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of reporting if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- The protocol for parents to encourage reporting of suspected bullying behaviour is as follows... parents are asked to make an appointment to meet the class teacher.
- The school will develop 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.
- The use of mobile phones will follow the procedure as outlined in our Code of Behaviour.
- The listing of supports currently being used in the school and the identification of other supports available to the school e.g. GLEN [www.glen.ie](http://www.glen.ie), BeLonGTo [www.belongto.org](http://www.belongto.org)

#### **Implementation of curricula**

- The school will conduct a comprehensive review of the SPHE policy.
- The full implementation of the SPHE, RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.

#### **Links to other policies**

- The following school policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to bullying, e.g. Code of Behaviour, Child Protections policy, Supervision of pupils, Acceptable Use policy, Attendance.

**7. 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 (note - Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*) :

**Note:** 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) Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved {including pupils, parents/guardians understand this approach from the outset

### **Reporting bullying behaviour**

- Any pupil or parent/guardian 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.
- 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.

### **Investigating and dealing with incident of bullying.**

- 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
- 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
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.
- Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved
- 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.
- 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 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.
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face them from the other members of the group after 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 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.
- 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 parents) 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.

### **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;
  - 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.

### **Recording of Bullying Behaviour**

All staff are reminded that recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner.

The schools procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows...

#### **Informal – predetermination that bullying has occurred.**

1. All staff must report incidents witnessed by them or notified to them, to the relevant class teacher.
2. While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher will use his/her professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.
3. All recording will be done in a special incident folder which will progress with the class each year. This will be kept with the pupil report cards in the office.
4. The relevant teacher must inform the principal of all incidents being investigated.

#### **Formal Stage 1 – Determination that bullying has occurred**

- If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved. These records will be kept in the special incident folder as well.
- The relevant teacher must communicate confirmed bullying incidents to other staff members {supervising teachers, course day teachers, learning support etc. }as soon as possible.

#### **Formal Stage 2 - Appendix 3**

- The relevant teacher must use the recording template at appendix 3 to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances...
1. 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 and
  2. Following the discovery of confirmed sustained bullying behaviour.... This must be reported immediately to the principal or deputy

In each of the circumstances at (1) and (2) above, the recording template at **Appendix 3** must be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable. It should also be noted that the timeline for recording bullying behaviour in the recording template at **Appendix 3** does not in any way preclude the relevant teacher from consulting the Principal or Deputy Principal at an earlier stage in relation to a case.

An automatic Red Card will be issued to any pupil who after 20 school days has not stopped engaging in bullying behaviour.

#### **Established intervention strategies**

- A. Teacher interviews with all pupils
- B. Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be done informally or implemented through a more structured mediation process depending on the circumstances.
- C. No blame approach.
- D. Circle time.
- E. Social Skills classes
- F. Anti-bullying workshops targeted at 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> classes.
- G. Promotion of Rainbows Programme
- H. School Assemblies to promote and acknowledge positive behaviour.
- I. Promotion of reward systems within classes and school wide to promote positive behaviour.
- J. Common class rules to be posted up in all class rooms
- K. The following link of further intervention strategies by Ken Rigby will also be given consideration by the school.  
[www.bullyingawarenessweek.org](http://www.bullyingawarenessweek.org)

#### **8. 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*) :

- A. All in school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities to raise self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience.
- B. SEN pupils will be encouraged to discuss concerns etc with their SNA, class teacher or resource teacher.
- C. SEN pupils will be explicitly taught strategies to recognise bullying behaviour, how to tackle it and how to prevent it as much as is reasonably possible within resource time.
- D. If pupils require counselling or further supports, the school will endeavour, in conjunction with parents to provide advice for or to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.
- E. Pupils will be encouraged to understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour should be discussed/reported to a teacher.



## 9. 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.

## 10. 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.

**11. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on April 29<sup>th</sup> 2014**

**12. This policy has been made available** to school personnel, is published on the school website, is available to parents on request from the office and has been provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and the patron if requested.

**13. 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, be published on the school website, be readily accessible to parents and pupils on request 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 of Education.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Chairperson of Board of Management) (Principal)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of next review: April 2016

**Table A: Key elements of a positive school culture and climate**

The school acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment.

The school acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual and his/her worth as a human being.

The school promotes positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among all its members.

The school prohibits vulgar, offensive, sectarian or other aggressive behaviour or language by any of its members.

The school has a clear commitment to promoting equity in general and gender equity in particular in all aspects of its functioning.

The school has the capacity to change in response to pupils' needs.

The school identifies aspects of curriculum through which positive and lasting influences can be exerted towards forming pupils' attitudes and values.

The school takes particular care of "at risk" pupils and uses its monitoring systems to facilitate early intervention where necessary and it responds to the needs, fears or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner.

The school recognises the need to work in partnership with and keep parents informed on procedures to improve relationships on a school-wide basis.

The school recognises the role of parents in equipping the pupil with a range of life-skills.

The school recognises the role of other community agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying.

The school promotes habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the interdependence of people in groups and communities.

The school promotes qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among all its members both in school and out of school.

Staff members share a collegiate responsibility, under the direction of the Principal, to act in preventing bullying/aggressive behaviour by any member of the school community.

## **Table B Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate**

The following are some practical tips for immediate actions that can be taken to help build a positive school culture and climate and to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour.

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 them 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 ignored.

Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.

Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.

Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use.

Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.

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 rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.

All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.

Ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.

School staff can get pupils to help them 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 again 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 establishment and work of student councils.

## **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. Sources** of information of bullying issue (tick relevant box(es))

**4. Location** of incidents (tick relevant box(es))

Pupil concerned	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other	

**5. Name of person(s) who first reported the bullying concern**

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**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**

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**9. Details of actions taken**

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Signed \_\_\_\_\_ (Relevant Teacher) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal \_\_\_\_\_