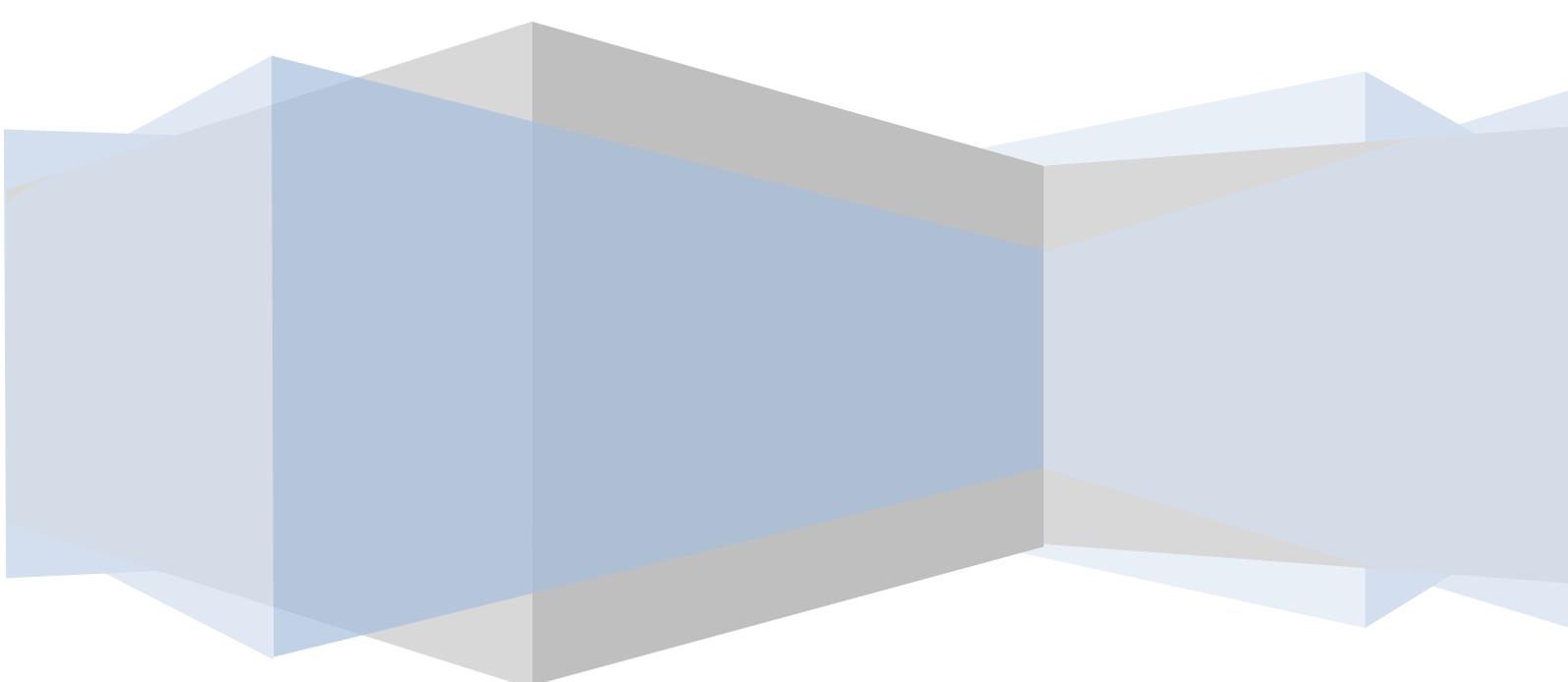


# **St. Margaret's National School Curracloe**

## **Anti-Bullying Policy**

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# Introduction

The role of St. Margaret's National School is to provide an appropriate education for all its pupils. A stable, secure learning environment is an essential requirement to achieve this goal. Bullying behaviour, by its very nature, undermines and dilutes the quality of education. Research shows that bullying can have short and long-term effects on the physical and mental well-being of pupils, on engagement with school, on self-confidence and on the ability to pursue ambitions and interests.

School-based bullying can be positively and firmly addressed through a range of school-based measures and strategies through which all members of the school community are enabled to act effectively in dealing with this behaviour. While it is recognised that home and societal factors play a substantial role both in the cause in the prevention of bullying, the role of the school in preventative work is also crucial and should not be underestimated. School-based initiatives can either reinforce positive efforts or help counteract unsuccessful attempts of parents to change unacceptable behaviour. Parents and pupils have a particularly important role and responsibility in helping the school to prevent and address school-based bullying behaviour and to deal with any negative impact within school of bullying behaviour that occurs elsewhere.

It is of crucial importance that St. Margaret's National School creates and implements a school policy setting out its approach to prevent and tackle bullying behaviour. An anti-bullying policy, when developed and implemented across the school community, can be the cornerstone in countering bullying behaviour in primary schools.

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## 1. REQUIREMENT OF EDUCATION (WELFARE) ACT 2002

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB), the Board of Management of St. Margaret's National School Curracloe 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. KEY PRINCIPLES OF BEST PRACTICE

The Board of Management of St. Margaret's National School, Curracloe 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) 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;
- 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 aspect of curriculum through which positive and lasting influences can be exerted towards forming pupil's 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 of 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 pupils 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;

**(b) Effective leadership**

**(c) A school-wide approach**

**(d) A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact**

**(e) 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;

**(f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils**

**(g) Supports for staff**

**(h) Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and**

**(i) On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.**

### **3. 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:

- 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*.

The list of examples below is non exhaustive, and schools may wish to add behaviours which reflect their own circumstances.

### Examples of bullying behaviours

<b>General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying</b>	<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>
<b>Cyber</b>	<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> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <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> Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation (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>
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#### 4. RELEVANT TEACHERS FOR DEALING WITH BULLYING

The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows:

Principal	Emer McCrea
Deputy Principal	Mary Rose Newman
Special Duties Teacher	Mary Doyle
Learning Support Teacher	Aileen Cloake
Class Teacher	Caroline Byrne
Class Teacher	Clare Burke

**The above-mentioned teachers may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.**

#### 5. EDUCATION/PREVENTION STRATEGIES

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 (see Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

##### Sample Education and prevention strategies

<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>• The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develop an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it's prevention and intervention.</li> <li>• An annual audit of professional development needs with a view to assessing staff require-</li> </ul>
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ments through internal staff knowledge/expertise and external sources

- Professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teacher(s)
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community.
- 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.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parent(s)/guardian(s) are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school (every year).
- The implementation of regular whole school awareness measures including a dedicated notice board in the school; an awareness week in the School in September; parent(s)/guardian(s) seminars; and regular school assemblies.
- Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. 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.
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.:
  - Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
  - Hand note up with homework.
  - Bullying prevention notes in older classes (weekly).
  - Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
  - Administer a confidential questionnaire once a term to all pupils.
  - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- Identify clear protocols to encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied. The protocol should be developed in consultation with parents.
- The development 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, as is the pupils' use of mobile phones.
- The listing of supports currently being used in the school and the identification of other supports available to the school.

#### **Implementation of curricula**

- The full implementation of the SPHE curriculum and the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes, Stay Safe Programme and The Walk Tall Programme,.
- School wide delivery of lessons on **Relational aggression** , **Cyber Bullying** (Be Safe-Be Web wise, Web wise Primary teachers' resources), **Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying, Diversity and Interculturalism**. The school should list every resource related to the SPHE curriculum, and make a list of supports.
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardai, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying
- 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.
- The school will implement the advice in "Sexual Orientation advice for schools" (RSE Primary, see booklet).

**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 Policy and Bus Safety Practice.

## 6. SCHOOL PROCEDURES FOR INVESTIGATION

The primary aim 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). 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.

### **Reporting bullying behaviour**

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) 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.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs) and cleaner must report bullying behaviour witnessed by them to the relevant teacher.

### **Investigating and dealing with incidents**

- Parent(s)/guardian(s) 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 will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.
- Where possible incidents will be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
- All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned;
- 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 avoiding conflict and the apportion of blame;
- If this involves a group situation, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should 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.
- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken by the school, in accordance with the Anti-Bullying Policy. In this way the school will give parent(s)/guardian(s) an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the pupils;
- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of St. Margaret's National School, Curracloe Anti-Bullying Policy and every efforts will be made to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;
- It will also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parent(s)/guardian(s)) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, that this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school.

### Recording of Bullying Behaviour

- 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;
  - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardian(s) 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(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
- In the event that a parent(s)/guardian(s) has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

### Recording of bullying behaviour

The recording of any bullying behaviour will be done in an objective and factual manner.

St. Margaret's National School Curraclloe's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

#### **Informal- pre-determination that bullying has occurred**

- The staff will keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. These records will be kept in the secretary's office. All incidents must be reported to the Principal Teacher.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. This teacher will keep his/her own written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.
- The relevant teacher will report to the Principal Teacher on all incidents being investigated.
- The use of 'Restorative Practice' sheets will be used for recording pupils' viewpoints.

#### **Formal Stage 1-determination that bullying has occurred**

- If it has been established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher will 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 retained and stored in the secretary's office.

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

The relevant teacher will use the recording template at **Appendix 3** to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

- a) in cases where he/she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and

appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred; and

b) Where St. Margaret's National School, Curracloe has decided as part of its anti-bullying policy that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour will be recorded and reported immediately to the School Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

When the recording template (**Appendix 3**) is used, it will be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy given to the principal. These will be stored in a locked cabinets in the Principal's/Secretary's office.

#### **Established intervention strategies to be used where appropriate**

- Teacher interviews with all pupils
- Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process
- Working with parent(s)/guardian(s) to support school interventions
- No Blame Approach
- Circle Time
- Restorative interviews
- Restorative conferencing
- Implementing sociogram questionnaires

#### **Follow up and Recording**

- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher will, as part of his/her professional judgment, take the following factors into account:
  - Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
  - Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as practicable;
  - Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable;
  - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardian(s) or the School Principal or Deputy Principal;
- Follow up meetings with the relevant parties will be arranged separately with a view to possibly bring them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable;
- Where a parent(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must be referred as appropriate, to St. Margaret's National School Curracloe's complaints procedures.
- In the event that a parent(s)/guardian(s) has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school will advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

## **7. SCHOOLS PROGRAMME OF SUPPORT**

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows :

- All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience e.g.

- Buddy / Peer mentoring system
- Group work such as circle time

- If pupils require counselling or further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying incident/behaviour.
- Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.
- Serious incidents 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.
- Where the bullying incident is serious and where the bullying 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.
- The Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools also prove 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.

## **8. SUPERVISION AND MONITOR 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. These measures include appropriate supervision of social activities and playtime. "Hot-spots" and "hot-times" can be identified and appropriately supervised. All pupils and in particular the senior pupils can be seen as a resource in countering bullying behaviour. Non-teaching staff may also contribute and be part of the process to counter bullying behaviour in St. Margaret's National School, Curraclloe.

