



St. Vincent's Secondary School Glasnevin

Anti-Bullying Policy

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB (now TUSLA), The Board of Management of St. Vincent's Secondary School has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* which were published in September 2013.

Introductory Statement

The Board of Management and the staff of St. Vincent's recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils. The staff of St. Vincent's accepts a collective responsibility, under the Guidance of the Principal, to act in preventing bullying, aggressive, harassing behaviour by any member of the school community.

The school recognises the role of the entire school community in identifying and reporting bullying behaviour, and acknowledges its own role in taking appropriate action when bullying behaviour becomes apparent.

Every person, student, staff member and parent in St. Vincent's is entitled to respect and to be free of any type of bullying. The school will be proactive to ensure, as far as possible, that bullying does not take place. It is important to highlight that the reporting of bullying incidents is always the most responsible behaviour.

Scope

While the Policy addresses issues related to bullying of students (:i.e. Situations in which one or more students are the victim(s) of bullying), the policy applies to teaching and other school staff, parents, guardians and other insofar as measures under the policy relate to them. It is acknowledged that the procedures for dealing with staff-staff incidents may be different and in this regard, management will refer to relevant Employment Equality Acts.

The policy will apply to the following time periods/activities:

- Within school time

- Going to and from school
- School Tours/Trips
- Extra-curricular activities
- Where a bullying incident is disclosed to the school

Furthermore the policy applies outside the school if the behaviour impacts on any person's participation in our school.

Principles of our Policy

The Board and staff of St. Vincent's are 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

Rationale

This policy has been formulated in order to create a community that respects the rights of all members and ensures that all students can learn in a safe and caring environment.

The Board of Management has a statutory obligation to ensure that a policy is in place that reflects the principles and values of the religious and educational philosophy of the school.

The role of all members of the school community: management, teaching, secretarial and auxiliary staff, parents and students is to care for each other and to provide everyone with a safe environment.

By law it is the responsibility of schools to develop an Anti-Bullying Policy.

Mission Statement

St. Vincent's Secondary School aims to provide a quality catholic education for all, in the tradition of Edmund Rice, which promotes leadership, fosters community and respects diversity.

Bullying damages these relationships. This school is committed to creating an environment where bullying is not accepted or tolerated.

Objectives

- To create a school ethos which encourages students to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour;
- To raise awareness of bullying as an unacceptable form of behaviour with school management , teachers, students, parents/guardians;
- To create a school ethos that acknowledges, accommodates and respects a diversity of students across the nine grounds covered by equality legislation;
- To ensure that the school's Social, Personal and Health Education raises awareness of the factors associated with bullying behaviour and develops appropriate knowledge, skills and behaviours;
- To take practical actions to prevent incidents of bullying behaviour e.g. to ensure comprehensive supervision and monitoring measures through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation;
- To develop procedures for reporting and recording incidents of bullying behaviour;

- To develop procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour;
- To develop a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and those involved in bullying behaviour;
- To work with, and through, the various local agencies in countering all forms of bullying and anti-social behaviour
- To create a school ethos that acknowledges, accommodates and respects a diversity of people across the nine grounds;
- To promote activities that foster a caring school community
- To highlight the negative effects that Bullying can have on a person's Wellbeing, with particular focus on the strands in the New Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines (Active, Responsible, Connected, Resilient, Aware, Respected)

What Members of the School Community are Covered by this Policy?

All members of the school community are subject to this code, particularly the following relationships:

- Student to Student;
- Student to any Staff Member;
- Staff Member to Student;
- Parent to Staff Member;
- Staff Member to Parent;
- Staff Member to Staff Member

Definition of Bullying

Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical in nature that is conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

This behaviour may target any of the nine areas of discrimination covered by the Equal Status Acts 2000, 2008:

- Gender
- Marital Status
- Family Status
- Sexual Orientation
- Religion
- Age

- Race
- Membership of the Travelling Community
- Disability

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour including a once-off or hurtful text message or private messaging do not fall within this definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

However, in the context of these procedures placing a once-off 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.

Social Networking sites will continue to be blocked within the school in accordance with the school's acceptable use of ICT Policy.

Types of Bullying

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

- **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 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 when 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 without the pupil in public places (including online), 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 on one person; 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 and hurtful messages is the most common form of online 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. 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 the theft of property for delivery to another who is engaged in bullying behaviour

The above list is not an exhaustive list of bullying behaviours

Indicators of Bullying Behaviour:

The following signs and symptoms may suggest that a pupil is being bullied:

- Anxiety about travelling to and from school e.g. requesting parents to drive or collect him, changing travel routes, avoiding regular times for travelling to or from school
- Unwillingness to go to school, refusal to attend, truancy
- Deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school
- Pattern of physical illnesses e.g. headaches, stomach aches
- Unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour which may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or more especially after longer school holidays
- Visible signs of anxiety or distress e.g. stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, bedwetting
- Spontaneous out-of-character comments about either pupils or teachers
- Possessions missing or damaged
- Increased requests for money or stealing money
- Unexplained bruising or cuts or damaged clothing
- Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling him

There may be other signs depending on the individual and his circumstances. The above signs do not necessarily mean that a pupil is being bullied but if repeated or occurring in combination, these signs do warrant investigation in order to establish what is affecting the pupil.

Investigating and Dealing With Bullying

All members of the school community have an obligation to report incidents of bullying, Students may report an incident of bullying in the following ways:

- Direct approach to a Subject Teacher, Form Teacher, Guidance Counsellor, Anti-Bullying Coordinator, Deputy Principal, Principal
- A note from a student or parent/guardian handed to a teacher e.g. with homework or in journal
- A phone call or email by a parent/guardian or student to the Guidance Counsellor, Guidance Counsellor, Form Teacher, Deputy Principal, Principal
- A note can be place under the door of the office of the Anti-Bullying Coordinator

Incidents of bullying behaviour, no matter how trivial, which are drawn to the attention of a teacher, will be dealt with by the relevant member of staff e.g.: Principal, Deputy Principal, Guidance Counsellor, Anti-Bullying Coordinator, Form Teacher.

Non-teaching staff e.g. Secretaries, Caretakers and Cleaners are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, to the appropriate member of staff

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:

- The primary reason for the Anti-Bullying Coordinator 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

Education and Prevention:

The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:

Staff

- All staff share a responsibility, under the guidance and direction of the Principal to act to prevent bullying and harassment by any member of the school community. Teachers will regularly emphasise the importance of raising issues of concern with their Subject Teacher / Form Teacher / Guidance Counsellor / Anti-Bullying Coordinator / Deputy Principal / Principal
- Provision of guidelines for staff in dealing with reports of bullying
- A dedicated Anti-Bullying Coordinator, whose role it is to investigate claims of bullying and to keep a detailed record of incidents, whether resolved or ongoing and to report to management if/when necessary
- Teachers encourage students to be inclusive in their activities
- Staff, students and parents are made aware of expectations through the inclusion of information around conduct and respect in the School Journal
- The Anti-Bullying Policy is available on the school website
- Regular reminders of the Anti-Bullying Policy are given during Tutorial period

Students

- Prominent presence of materials throughout the school highlighting the importance of fostering a warm, inclusive and bullying-free school environment
- Students are required to sign the School's Code of Behaviour which promotes respect for self, others and other people's property
- Staff, students and parents are made aware of expectations through the inclusion of information around conduct and respect in the School Journal
- Anti-Bullying Policy is available on School Website
- Regular Reminders of Anti-Bullying Policy is available on the School Website
- Provision of support for students by Form Teachers, Guidance Counsellor, Anti-Bullying Coordinator, SPHE Teachers, Subject Teachers
- Involvement of Students in decision making process through development of Student Council, the Mentor System and other positions of leadership (e.g.; school band, sports teams)
- Mentors, Student Council Members and students in positions of leadership are vigilant in their monitoring of students' relationships and report unacceptable behaviour to the appropriate authorities

Parents/Guardians

- Provision of information about bullying at meetings of incoming First Year Parents and other suitable opportunities during the academic year
- Staff, students and parents are made aware of expectations through the inclusion of information around conduct and respect in the School Journal
- Anti-Bullying policy is available on the school website
- Parenting classes are offered throughout the year
- Parents are consulted in the formation of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy
- Parents attend regular meetings with staff and management (both scheduled on calendar and by appointment)
- The school is about to Re-establish it's Parents Council to enhance the voice of Parents within the school community

The school aims to foster a positive school culture and climate by doing the following:

- Modelling respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times
- Explicitly teaching pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school

- Displaying key respect messages in the classroom, in assembly areas and around the school, involving pupils in the development of these messages
- Noticing and acknowledging desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention in class and assembly and through the awarding of VSWare Points
- Consistently tackling 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
- Giving constructive feedback to students when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent
- Having a system of encouragement and awards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school's code of behaviour and routines
- Promoting the appropriate use of social media
- Mobile phone and internet use is only acceptable when authorised under direction from teachers for an educational purpose. Students failing to follow our *Acceptable Use Policy* will be subject to consequences stated in the school's Code of Behaviour
- Actively involving parents and/or the Parents Council in awareness raising campaigns around social media
- Actively promoting the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school
- Highlighting and explicitly teaching school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and during induction in first year
- All staff actively looking out for signs of bullying behaviour
- Ensuring that is adequate supervision
- Supporting and encouraging the continued excellent work of our Student Council

Procedures for Investigating, Recording and Follow-Up of Bullying Behaviour:

- The primary aim for the Anti-Bullying Coordinator 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 Coordinator will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved
- All reports will be investigated and dealt with by the Coordinator. In that way students will gain confidence by knowing who the relevant teacher to approach is if they have a concern.. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It is made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be "telling" or "ratting" but are in fact behaving responsibly

- Parents and students 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
- It is important that all involved (including each set of students and parents) understand the above approach from the outset
- It is the role of the Anti-Bullying Coordinator and any teachers involved to take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour.
- Reports will generally come from the form-teacher, as it is they who primarily deal with matters relating to discipline and care. These reports will be forwarded onto the Anti-Bullying Coordinator, who is the person with overall responsibility for all allegations of bullying.
- If the form-teacher or indeed the Anti-Bullying Coordinator are named in the report, or if there is a complaint regarding a staff member, then the incident will be reported directly to the Principal/Deputy Principal
- Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation in order to ensure the privacy of all involved
- All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all the students concerned. Students who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the Anti-Bullying Coordinator 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
- Where a group of students is affected by a bullying incident, each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the Coordinator
- 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 that 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 to discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their students
- Where it is determined that a student has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him how he is in breach of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and efforts should be made to try to get him to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied
- Sanctions may include (but not confined to)
 - Verbal Warning
 - Agreement of Good Behaviour

Detention

Withdrawal of Privileges (e.g. participation in school events, trips, matches)

Suspension

Referral to the Board of Management

- It must be also made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary actions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his parents and the school
 - 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 agreeable, which can be beneficial in the long term
 - In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the Anti-Bullying Coordinator must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:
 1. Whether bullying behaviour has ceased
 2. Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable
 3. Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable
 4. Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents, relevant teachers or the Principal/Deputy Principal
 - Those affected by bullying may be referred to the Guidance Counsellor and/or relevant external agencies for counselling or other supports/interventions. His will also be noted and monitored by the school's Care Team
 - Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents can
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Procedures for Recording Bullying Behaviour:

- The Board of Management ensures that the school has clear procedures for the formal noting and reporting of bullying behaviour.
- While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying are investigated and dealt with by the Anti-Bullying Coordinator, they must use their professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same
- If it is established that bullying has occurred, the Coordinator 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
- The Anti-Bullying Coordinator must use the Recording Template in Appendix 1 to record the bullying behaviour

- These records must be completed in full and retained by the Coordinator and a copy provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable

Communication of Anti-Bullying Policy

- The school's Anti-Bullying Policy will be made available to all school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. If necessary, a copy will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills and ERST.
- Our Board of Management will ensure that the policy is regularly highlighted and promoted on a school-wide basis with particular attention being given to incoming pupils (transition programme) and parents (Information Evening and Coffee Mornings)
- School management will ensure that pupils, parents and staff members are made aware of the relevant teachers responsible for dealing with bullying concerns
- School rules and other information on bullying will be provided in pupil friendly, age appropriate formats and should be displayed around the school building

Referral of Serious Cases to the HSE:

- In relation to bullying in Schools, *Children First National Guidelines 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 instance 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

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.

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

Adoption of Policy:

- This Policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____

Availability of Policy:

- This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and will be provided to the Parents' Association when it reforms

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, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association (see Appendix 2). A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department

Appendix 1
Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour



St. Vincent's
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1. Name of Student Being Bullied and Class Group

Name _____ Class _____

2. Name(s) and Class(es) of Pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

Name	Class

3. Source of Bullying Concern/Report (tick the relevant box(es))

Pupil Concerned	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Class Teacher	
Form Teacher	
Other (Please Specify)	

4. Location of Incident(s) (tick relevant boxes)

Outdoors	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
Trip (Including on Bus)	
Bus to School	
Online	
Other (Please Specify)	

5. Name of Person(s) who reported Bullying Concern

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6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick the relevant box(es))

Physical Aggression		Cyber-Bullying	
Damage to Property		Intimidation	
Isolation / Exclusion		Malicious Gossip	
Name Calling		Other (Please Specify)	

7. Where Behaviour is Regarded as Identity-Based Bullying, indicate the Relevant Category

Homophobic	Disability / SEN related	Racist	Membership of the Travelling Community	Other (Please Specify)

8. Brief Description of Bullying Behaviour and its Impact

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Signed: _____ **(Relevant Teacher)**

Date: _____

Appendix 2

Checklist for annual review of Anti-Bullying Policy and its Implementation

The Board of Management must undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation. The following checklist must be used for this purpose. The checklist is an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. In order to complete the checklist, an examination of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy will be required.

Has the Board Formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools</i> ?	
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the Parents' Association?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	
Is the Board satisfied that school staff are sufficiently familiar with the policy and procedures to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy and procedures in their day to day work?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	
Have all of the preventative strategies been implemented?	
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and educational strategies that have been implemented been examined?	
Is the Board Satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	
Has the Board discussed how well the school is handling all reports of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and not therefore included in the Principal's periodic report to the Board?	
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case initiated or completed?	

Has the data available from cases reported to the Principal (by the bullying recording template) been analysed to identify any issues, trends or patterns in bullying behaviour?	
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any further areas for improvement?	

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed: _____

Date: _____

Principal