Anti-Bullying Policy



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 Saint Francis College Rochestown 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.

DEFINITION

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, 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.

THE BOARD OF MANAGEMENT

The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of students and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

A positive school culture and climate which:

is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity

- encourages students to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment
- promotes respectful relationships across the school community
- effective leadership
- a school-wide approach
- a shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact
- shows implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that-
- builds empathy, respect and resilience in students
- explicitly addresses the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular homophobic and transphobic bullying
- demonstrated effective supervision and monitoring of students.
- Includes supports for staff
- Has consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
- Has on-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy

SCHOOL STAFF

The school staff will foster an atmosphere of friendship, respect and tolerance. Students' self-esteem will be developed through celebrating individual differences, achievements, acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour and manners and providing opportunities for success throughout the curriculum and the school. Teachers will help students to develop empathy by discussing feelings and trying to put themselves in the place of others. Relationships with students will be based on mutual respect and trust so that students will have confidence in the school staff. Teachers will be vigilant, respond sensitively and caringly to students who disclose incidents of bullying. Designated teachers will discuss the school's anti-bullying policy with the students. Where practical, all staff will foster a 'Reform not blame' approach to encourage students to report incidents of bullying and help the bully to reform his behaviour.

STUDENTS

- Students are expected to be tolerant and to have respect for each other
- Students should report incidents of bullying to their parents and teachers
- Students should report incidents to teachers where other students are the subject of the bullying behaviour

PARENTS/GUARDIANS

- Encourage positive behaviour and discourage negative behaviour both at home and at school
- Encourage your son(s) to solve difficulties without resorting to aggression
- Encourage your son(s) to share, to be kind, to be caring, and to be understanding towards others
- Watch out for signs and symptoms that your son(s) is/are being bullied or is/are bullying others. Don't dismiss your instincts as being wrong
- Discuss the school's anti-bullying policy with your son(s). Support the school in its efforts to prevent and treat bullying.

Access to technology means that cyber bullying can happen around the clock and the student's home may not be a safe haven from such bullying. Students are increasingly communicating in ways that are often unknown to adults and are free from supervision. The nature of these technologies means digital content can be shared and seen by a very wide audience almost instantly and is almost impossible to delete permanently. While cyber bullying often takes place at home and at night, the impact can also be felt in school. Since access to social media is not provided by the school, parents have a responsibility to supervise their sons' behaviour on these sites. In any case where it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred the parents of both parties involved may be contacted to inform them of the matter and to explain the actions being taken by the school.

THIS POLICY APPLIES:

- In class, between classes (including breaktimes) and while on the school premises
- While in school uniform
- On the way to and on the way home from school
- On a school-based activity such as trips and extracurricular activities
- To anything done in the school name
- To any behaviour that adversely affects the school reputation or the education of any student in the school

TYPES OF BULLYING

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

- **Physical aggression:** This behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While students may engage in 'mess/mock' fights, they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.
- Intimidation: This may be based on the use of very aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon. Particularly upsetting can be a facial expression which conveys aggression and/or dislike. Intimidation may also take the form of verbal threats.
- Isolation/exclusion and other relational bullying: This occurs where a certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or all of the class group. This practice is usually initiated by the person engaged in bullying behaviour and can be difficult to detect. It may be accompanied by writing insulting remarks about the student in public places, by passing around notes about or drawings of the student or by whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard. Relational bullying occurs when a person's attempt to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. This can include controlling the person 'do this or x will happen' a group ganging up against one person; non-verbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumours about a person or giving them the 'silent treatment'.
- 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, those singled out for

attention because they are perceived to be weak academically or those that are singled out as high achievers.

- Damage to property: Personal property can be the focus of attention for bullying in behaviour. This may result damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, schoolbooks and other learning material or interference with a student's locker or other property. 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 student not delivering on the demand). A student may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to another student engaged in bullying behaviour.
- **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 through:
 - text messaging and picture messaging on mobile phones/ handheld devices
 - social media websites
 - email
 - · instant messaging
 - in a chat room
 - on gaming websites and other websites
 - The most common forms of cyber-bullying are
 - Sending abusive/mean text messages or messages that breach the nine discriminatory grounds
 - Posting abusive/mean messages or comments on online forums/social networking sites
 - Hacking into a person's social networking account
 - Creating false social network accounts/websites
 - Impersonation on social media sites
 - Spreading rumours through mobile phones or online
 - This list is not exhaustive

HARASSMENT AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The term bullying encompasses harassment and sexual harassment, defined as follows:

Harassment: any form of unwanted conduct in relation to any of the nine grounds named in the equality legislation that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment for the victim. The nine discriminatory grounds are gender, marital status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion and membership of the Travelling community.

Sexual harassment: any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading or offensive environment for the victim.

PEOPLE TO CONTACT

(See Appendix 2 on reporting bullying)

Students may contact any member of staff to report bullying.

The relevant staff members for investigating and/or dealing with bullying in this school may include the following:

- Subject teacher
- Class Teacher
- Year Head
- Guidance counsellor
- Special Needs Assistant (SNA)
- Deputy Principal
- Principal

WHOLE SCHOOL EDUCATION AND PREVENTION STRATEGIES

To build a positive school culture and climate to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour, Saint Francis College Rochestown will:

- Publish the Anti-Bullying Policy on the **school website** <u>www.stfranciscollege.ie</u>
- Dedicate a page on the school website to anti-bullying information and strategies https://www.stfranciscollege.ie/antibullying
- Include anti-bullying strategies in the school journal
- Provide **information** about bullying to students, parents of incoming students, the Parents' Association etc.
- Maintain and further develop an awareness of bullying and its consequences among students through **school programmes and initiatives**. These include
- Reinforce our Mission Statement
- Reinforce policies such as our Code of Behaviour and AUP
- Provide SPHE Classes
- Provide RSE Classes
- Provide CSPE Classes
- Provide RE Classes
- Participate annually in an **Anti-Bullying Week** to include topics such as inclusion, empathy, diversity, friendship, etc
- Participate in relationship building activities
- Invite guest speakers to address students/teachers/parents as appropriate
- Display key respect and anti-bullying messages throughout the school
- Provide opportunities where Class Teachers and Year Heads will speak to classes and year groups about the unacceptability of bullying and the need to report any incident of bullying observed or suffered
- Promote positive behaviour at assemblies
- Encourage a **culture of telling** with a particular emphasis on the importance of morals and human rights. It will be made clear to students that they are not telling tales, just behaving responsibly
- Ensure that students know **who to tell and how to tell** e.g. directly approach a teacher, discreetly approach a staff member, hand up a note with homework, email to a staff member, get a parent or friend to tell on their behalf, etc

- Availability of an anonymous anti-bullying email address antibullying@stfranciscollege.ie
- Supervise students before, during and after school
- Will be **vigilant** for instances of bullying and will bring such incidents to the attention of the Year Head, Deputy Principals or Principal
- Consult with students and parents

PROCEDURES FOR INVESTIGATING AND DEALING WITH BULLYING

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.

REPORTING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

(See Appendix 2 on reporting bullying)

- It is vital that effective communication exists within the school and that "telling" is the norm
- Where practical, the school promotes a 'Reform not Blame' approach when dealing with incidents of bullying
- Everyone has a responsibility for others and a spirit of cooperation must be present.
- Any student 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 personnel.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant staff member

INVESTIGATING AND DEALING WITH INCIDENTS: STYLE OF APPROACH

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the relevant member of staff will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) 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;
- Members of staff should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.
- Where possible, incidents should be 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 students concerned. Students who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way. It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s)
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant member of staff 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 may be asked to write an account of the incident and may be subsequently interviewed individually. Thereafter, if appropriate, all those involved may be met as a group in an effort to resolve the situation.
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after the interview by the relevant member of staff;
- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant member of staff 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 reference to the school policy).

The school should 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 students;

- Where the relevant member of staff has 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 student being bullied;
- It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of students and parent(s)/guardian(s)) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the student being disciplined, his parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school;

FOLLOW UP AND RECORDING

In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant member of staff must, as part of his/his 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)s or the school Principal or Deputy Principals.
- 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 student 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

It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner.

The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

- · Informal- pre-determination that bullying has occurred
- All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. All incidents must be reported to the relevant Year Head.
- All reports including anonymous reports of bullying must be reported by the relevant member of staff. The Year Head/Deputy Principal must keep a written record of the reports, the investigation, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.
- Informal-determination that bullying has occurred
- If it is established that bullying has occurred, the Year Head/Deputy Principal 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.
- All records will be retained on the school Management Information System and/or a secure file in the Principal's office.
- The Year Head/Deputy Principal must use the recording template at Appendix 4 to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:
- 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.
- When the recording template is used, it will be retained by the Principal. Records will be kept in the Principal's office for a period of 7 years after the student leaves the school.

ESTABLISHED INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

- Interviews with all students
- Negotiating agreements between students and following these up by monitoring progress.
- This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process. Any follow-up will be recorded.
- Restorative interviews.
- No blame approach in as far as is practicable.
- Sanctions will be imposed as appropriate.

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

- All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the students affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience. These include:
 - Reinforcement of our Mission Statement
 - Reinforcement of policies such as our Code of Behaviour and AUP
 - SPHE Classes
 - RSE Classes
 - CSPE Classes
 - RE Classes
 - Visiting speakers
 - Tutor/Year Head system

- Pastoral care system
- If students require counselling or further supports, the school will endeavour to liaise with parents to help them access the appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be for the student affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.
- Students should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a member of staff. Students who witness bullying are encouraged to tell and/or become an ally of the victim.

SUPERVISION AND MONITORING OF STUDENTS

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. This includes 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 the relevant personnel. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school which is covered in the school's Acceptable Usage Policy.

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 students or staff or the harassment of students 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.

ANTI-BULLYING STRATEGY

- A student must always report any behaviour which he finds hurtful.
- He may tell his Class Teacher or Year Head, the School, Guidance Counsellors, the Deputy Principals or Principal.
- Some students who feel uncomfortable with or hurt by the conduct of another student may prefer to tell their parents or guardians and ask them to speak to a member of staff on their behalf.
- He may speak to another student and ask for the information to be reported to a staff member on his behalf

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The important thing is that hurtful behaviour should be reported so that it can be openly discussed with the perpetrator. Sometimes a student may not be aware that his treatment of other students is not acceptable and so it is vital that he is made conscious of the unpleasantness of his words or actions. Sometimes a student may require a severe warning about his future behaviour and may need to be monitored carefully.

No student should ever suffer bullying in silence.

All students should take responsibility for ensuring that no other student is allowed to feel left out or isolated. If you are aware that someone in your class or year is suffering through bullying or exclusion, you must bring this to the attention of a member of staff.

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 23/11/2023

Date of next review: November 2024

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 students 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 students 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 students with a disability or SEN.
- Give constructive feedback to students when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.
- Explicitly teach students about the appropriate use of social media.
- Positively encourage students to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use. Follow up and follow through with students 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 student 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 students to help them to identify bullying "hot spots" and "hot times" for bullying in the school. Hot spots tend to be in the 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 students are in the school yard, moving classrooms or where there is a gap between teachers in rooms.
- Support the establishment and work of student councils.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE BEING BULLIED OR WITNESS BULLYING

No student should ever suffer bullying in silence. You have the right to be free from all forms bullying of bullying. To ensure that stops, you must report the bullying behaviour immediately. should The report be made to a person with whom you feel comfortable and trust.

Who to tell.

You can approach any member of staff to report bullying. Staff members include:

- Subject teacher
- Class teacher
- Year Head
- Guidance Counsellor
- Special Needs Assistant (SNA)
- Deputy Principals
- Principal

You may also tell a parent/guardian and ask them to speak to a member of staff.

You may speak to another student and ask that the information be reported to a member of staff on your behalf.

How to tell.

You can:

- Directly approach a teacher
- Discreetly approach a staff member
- Hand up a note with your homework
- Ask to go to the bathroom and call into a Deputy Principal
- Email a staff member
- Get a parent or friend to tell on your behalf

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF EACH MEMBER OF THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Right			Respons	ibilit	ty
	•	I have the right to be safe in	•		I have a responsibility to make
	school		C	our s	chool a safe and secure place for
			C	ther	S

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF STUDENTS

I have the right to be	I have the responsibility to ensure that
Treated with respect	 Others are treated with respect
Physically safe	 Others are physically safe
 Free from all forms of verbal bullying 	 Other people's property is safe
Free from intimidation	 Others are free from verbal bullying
 Free from any hurtful remarks or 	 Others are free from intimidation
gestures regarding person, ethnicity,	 Others are free from any hurtful
religion and culture	remarks or gestures regarding person,
 Able to learn without disruption 	ethnicity, religion and culture
	 Others are able to learn without
	disruption
	 Bullying behaviour is acted upon as
	appropriate

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS

I have a right to	I have the responsibility to ensure that
Expect that my child is safe in school and	Bullying is reported to the school
can learn without disruption	I co-operate fully with implementation
	of the school policy.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF WITNESSES/BY-STANDERS

 Say 'no' or 'stop' when you see or hear someone behaving unfairly. Be assertive not aggressive. Seek help immediately from an adult, if the situation is dangerous Tell when you know a student is being Join in bullying behaviour e.g. laughing, sneering, slagging, fighting, recording, sharing media Cheer on somebody who is bullying Stay in a dangerous situation e.g. a 		Join in bullying
bullied. (This is not "ratting". It is fight	 assertive not aggressive. Seek help immediately from an adult, if the situation is dangerous Tell when you know a student is being bullied. (This is not "ratting". It is 	slagging, fighting, recording, sharing media Cheer on somebody who is bullying Stay in a dangerous situation e.g. a fight
the contract of the contract o	being responsible and telling to be •	Bully the bully. That makes you a bully

TEMPLATE FOR RECORDING BULLYING BEHAVIOUR

Nama		Class
Name		Class
_	_	
	_	
_	_	
3. Source of bull	ying concern/report	4. Location of incidents
Student concerr	ied	Yard
Other student		Classroom
Parent		Corridor
Teacher		Toilets
Other		Bus
		Other
(tick relevant b	ox(es))*	(tick relevant box(es))*
5. Name of pers	on(s) who reported the b	oullying concern.
	ng Behaviour (tick releva	
Physical Aggress	ion	Cyber-Bullying Cyber-Bullying
Physical Aggress Damage to Prop	ion erty	Cyber-Bullying Intimidation
Physical Aggress Damage to Prop Isolation/Exclusi	ion erty	Cyber-Bullying Intimidation Malicious Gossip
Physical Aggress Damage to Prop Isolation/Exclusi	ion erty	Cyber-Bullying Intimidation
Physical Aggress Damage to Prop Isolation/Exclusi Name Calling	erty on	Cyber-Bullying Intimidation Malicious Gossip Other (Specify)
Physical Aggress Damage to Prop Isolation/Exclusi Name Calling 7. Where behav	ion erty on iour is regarded as identi	Cyber-Bullying Intimidation Malicious Gossip Other (Specify) ty-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:
Physical Aggress Damage to Prop Isolation/Exclusi Name Calling	erty on	Cyber-Bullying Intimidation Malicious Gossip Other (Specify) ty-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

9. Details of actions taken.			
Signed:	(Relevant Year Head) Date:		
Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal:			