

Scoil Mhuire na Trócaire



Anti-Bullying Policy

This Policy is in conjunction with the Code of Behaviour Policy (listed as Appendix 1)

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB), the Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire na Trócaire has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* which were published in September 2013.
2. The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils. The school community believes strongly that respect for all at all times must be promoted and become intrinsic in the ethos of society. This is fundamentally, the biblical principal of the "Golden Rule." Matthew 7:12 – "So always treat others as you would like them to treat you."

The children are taught that society is made up of a variety of different people, all of whom deserve our respect, all of whom have the right to be treated equally and to have the fundamental right to be allowed to exist in society and be content in their lives. No bullying can therefore be tolerated and no discrimination based on the nine stated grounds included in equality legislation,, i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community, can be allowed.

The Board of Management and staff of Scoil Mhuire na Trócaire are 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;
- b) Effective leadership; The Principal and Deputy Principal will be available to support class teachers
- c) A school-wide approach; Lessons are addressed in each class and incidental circle time done on issues. School displays and posters are used.
- d) A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
- e) Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures eg. Friendship Week/Buddy Days etc.) 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; There is a timetable of the supervision rota.
- g) Supports for staff; SESS courses, Speakers, colleagues, other school policies & National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) &
- h) Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies);
- i) On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

3. In accordance with the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*¹ 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 (one incidence online is considered cyber bullying)
- 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.

¹ *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* Department of Education September 2013 Pg 8

Isolated or once-off incidents, with the exception of cyber bullying, of intentional negative behaviour, 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 e.g. Viber, WhatsApp, Snapchat, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram (this list is not exhaustive).

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*² and in Appendix 2.

A pupil/parent may bring a bullying incident/concern to any teacher in the school.

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is as follows: (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*)³:

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);

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

- All class teachers

Relevant Teacher is the teacher that witnesses bullying or to whom bullying is reported. The teacher on yard is the relevant teacher. **Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant.**

- Principal
- Deputy Principal

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 teacher.

² *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* Department of Education September 2013 Pg 9

³ *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* Department of Education September 2013 Pg 9

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

- Effective practice includes awareness raising measures, as needed, across all aspects of bullying and involves strategies to engage pupils in addressing problems when they arise. In particular, such strategies need to build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils.
- As self-esteem is a major factor in determining behaviour, we will, through both their curricular and extra-curricular programmes, provide pupils with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth.
- Initiatives and programmes focused on developing pupils' awareness and understanding of bullying, including its causes and effects, should deal explicitly with the issue of bullying, teaching the Social, Personal, Health Education (SPHE) resource, Walk Tall and Relationship & Sexuality Education (RSE).
- The school will focus on educating pupils on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while on-line and also on developing a culture of reporting any concerns about cyber-bullying. Liaison with Garda Síochana Community Garda and other speakers will be arranged in this regard. The school-wide approach and the role of parents as outlined in Section 6.3.1 from *'Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary & Post-Primary Schools: 2013'* – is of importance in this regard⁴.
- A school-wide approach: *"A school-wide approach (involving school management, staff, parents and pupils) to dealing with the problem of bullying behaviour is a key element of effective practice. Bullying behaviour affects not only those immediately involved. It can affect everyone in the classroom, in the school and, ultimately, in the wider community"*⁵
- The prevention and awareness raising measures should also take into account the scope for cyber-bullying to occur as a result of access to technology for the purposes of project work undertaken within the school. See Acceptable Use Policy re use of technology in school.
- Our school's approach to tackling and preventing bullying takes particular account of the needs of pupils with disabilities or with Special Educational Needs (SEN),

⁴ *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* Department of Education September 2013 Pg 23

⁵ *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* Department of Education September 2013 Pg 24

joins up with other relevant school policies and supports and ensures that all the services that provide for such pupils work together. Our approaches to decreasing the likelihood of bullying for pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) include inclusion, focusing on developing social skills, paying attention to key moments such as transitioning from primary to post-primary and cultivating a good school culture which has respect for all and helping one another as central.

- Our school's prevention and awareness raising measures to all types of bullying take into account the age and gender of the pupils involved. The school must work to raise the awareness of bullying so that all members of the school community understand what bullying is and how the school deals with bullying behaviour.
- As part of our prevention and awareness strategies the school has a Friendship Week each year to promote positive pupil interaction. It is proposed to have an Internet Safety day as part of Friendship Week.

6. The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:

A. Procedures for noting and reporting incidents of Bullying:-

- a) Incidents of bullying behaviour are reported to the class or relevant teacher by a child/children/parents.
- b) All incidents of bullying will be noted and the relevant recording template will be used when necessary ie Appendix 3. Incidents will be investigated and dealt with by members of Staff.
- c) Bullying behaviour by pupils will be referred immediately by the Class teacher to the Principal or Deputy-Principal.
- d) Parents/Guardians of all parties involved in the alleged bullying will be informed by the Class Teacher/Principal/Deputy-Principal earlier rather than later and a plan of action discussed.
- e) It will be made clear to all pupils that reporting incidents of bullying is not "telling tales" but behaving responsibly. Pupils will be helped to handle the possible pressures that face them from others after reporting to or being questioned by the teacher.

B. Procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying: -

- a) If bullying is suspected, we talk to the affected person(s), the pupil suspected of being responsible for the bullying behaviour and any witnesses.

- b) If any degree of bullying is reported or identified, Teachers will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with reported incidents.
- c) Incidents will be investigated outside the classroom situation, where possible.
- d) The teachers will speak separately to the pupils involved.
- e) All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned.
- f) Answers will be sought to the questions what, where, when, who and why.
- g) If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually.
- h) Teachers who are investigating cases of bullying behaviour will keep a written record of their discussions with those involved. (It may also be appropriate and helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s).
- i) In cases where it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, meetings will be arranged with the parents/guardians of the victim(s) as well as with the parents/guardians of any pupil involved in the bullying behaviour:
 - i. to explain the actions being taken and the reasons for them, referring them to the school policy,
 - ii. to discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the procedures taken by the school.
- j) See Disciplinary Procedure

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

Help and support will be given as is appropriate to both the affected person(s) and the pupil(s) suspected of being responsible for the bullying behaviour.

A. Support for the affected person(s)

We support the **affected person(s)** in the following ways:

- a) by offering him/her an immediate opportunity to talk about the experience with his/her class teacher or another teacher.
- b) by informing the affected person(s) parents/guardians and suggesting how they might help.
- c) by offering continuing support in the form of:
 - i. regular follow-up (documented) discussions to check on progress/positive outcomes or to record further incidents of bullying behaviour.

- ii. assistance with social and/or emotional aspects of bullying (self-esteem issues, assertiveness skills, knowing how to respond when an incident occurs, exploring “how not to be an affected person(s)”, etc.)

B. Support for Pupils involved in Bullying

In addition to applying appropriate consequences/sanctions for the incident(s) of bullying behaviour, as per the School’s Code of Behaviour (See Appendix 1 attached), we also try to help any pupil involved in bullying in the following ways:

- a) by offering him/her an opportunity to talk about what happened, to discover why he/she became involved, to help him/her see the incident(s) from the affected person(s) perspective, to help him/her see the seriousness of the behaviour
- b) by informing his/her parents/guardians and suggesting how they might help
- c) by offering continuing support to the individual in the form of:
- d) regular follow-up (documented) discussions to check on progress/positive outcomes, to offer positive feedback and encouragement if the bullying behaviour has ceased, and to discuss and develop a plan of action to address any subsequent incidents of bullying behaviour if applicable
- e) assistance with social and/or emotional aspects of bullying (self-esteem issues, emotional empathy, popularity issues, etc.)

8. Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

9. Prevention of Harassment

The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of pupils or staff or the harassment of pupils or staff on any of the nine grounds specified i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

- 10. Policy reviewed annually. Most recently it was reviewed by the in-school Management Team on 7th May 2022.

This policy will be presented to the Board of Management on 21st June 2022 for discussion with a view to ratification.

- 11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school app and school website and is readily accessible to parents and pupils on request from the School Office. A copy is also provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

- 12. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and is readily accessible to parents and pupils on request from the School Office and a copy will be provided to the Parents' Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department of Education and Skills.

- 13. This policy was reviewed on 14th June 2023

Signed: _____

Neil Corbett (Chairperson BOM)

Date: _____

Signed: _____

Irene O'Rourke (Principal)

Date: _____

Date of next review: June 2023

Appendix 1 – Code of Behaviour (See Policy)

Appendix 2

Examples of Bullying Behaviours

A. General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying:

- Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc.
- Physical aggression
- Damage to property
- Name calling
- Slagging
- The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person
- Offensive graffiti
- Extortion
- Intimidation
- Insulting or offensive gestures
- Invasion of personal space
- A combination of any of the types listed.

B. Cyber

- Spreading rumors, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation
- Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual
- Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name
- Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight
- Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online
- Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images
- Purposefully excluding someone from an online group
- Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety
- Silent telephone/mobile phone call
- Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls
- Abusive text messages
- Abusive email
- Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/ Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles
- Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures
- Abusive posts on any form of communication technology

C. Identity Based Behaviours

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).

D. Homophobic and Transgender

- Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation

Roll: 19989N

- Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation
- Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian...used in a derogatory manner
- Physical intimidation or attacks
- Threats

E. Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community

- Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background
- Exclusion on the basis of any of the above

F. Relational

This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:

- Malicious gossip
- Isolation & exclusion
- Excluding from the group
- Spreading rumours
- Breaking confidence
- Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear
- Use or terminology such as 'nerd' in a derogatory way

G. Additional Educational Needs, Disability

- Name calling
- Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs
- Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying
- Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues.
- Mimicking a person's disability
- Setting others up for ridicule

Appendix 3 Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name _____ Class _____

2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

3. Source of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es))*	
Pupil concerned	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))*	
Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other	

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

6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) *	
Physical Aggression	
Cyber-bullying	
Damage to Property	
Intimidation	
Isolation/Exclusion	
Malicious Gossip	
Name Calling	
Other (specify)	

7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:	
Homophobic	
Disability/SEN related	
Racist	
Membership of Traveller community	
Other (specify)	

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

9. Details of actions taken

Signed: _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date: _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

** Note: The categories listed in the tables 3, 4 & 6 are suggested and schools may add to or amend these to suit*

Appendix 4

Checklist for Annual Review of the Anti-Bullying Policy and Its Implementation

The Board of Management (the Board) 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 and review involving both quantitative and qualitative analysis, as appropriate across the various elements of the implementation of the school's anti-bullying policy will be required.

	Yes/No
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> ?	Yes
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the Parents' Association?	Yes
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	Yes
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?	Yes
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils? <i>Friendship week</i>	Yes
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	Yes
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	Yes
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	Yes
Has it been communicated to parents?	Yes
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	Yes
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal? No bullying instances reported 2016.	Yes
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?	Yes
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	No
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	No
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	No
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?	No
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	No
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	n/a

Signed: _____

Mr Neil Corbett (Chairperson BOM)

Date: _____

Signed: _____

Mrs. Irene O'Rourke (Principal)

Date: _____