



Anti-Bullying Policy

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of Scoil Mhaoilíosa 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 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 pupils 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;
 - Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that-
 - build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils;
 - 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);
 - 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* bullying is defined as follows:

Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physically 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
- 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 will be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour. (attached)

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*.

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

Ref. Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*

All class teachers will have responsibility for investigating alleged reported or witnessed instances of bullying in school. Where the alleged incident/s take place outside the classroom or while pupils are not under direct supervision of the class teacher, the class teacher and the member of staff who witnessed the incident or to whom the incident was reported will investigate the said allegation/incident.

5. The Role of the Principal

- The principal is kept informed by teachers at all times if there has been a bullying incident observed or reported in the classroom, and (what has been) the steps that the teacher has taken to deal with the issue.
- If the matter persists, the principal and the teacher meet with the parents of the child who is being bullied and facts are recorded in the bullying notebook that is kept in the office. Both the principal and teacher interview all parties concerned in an effort to make the bullying stop.

- The principal and the class teacher engage with the pupils concerned using the restorative justice model.
- The principal contacts the parents of the child being bullied after 2 weeks to check in with them.
- If a parent is not satisfied with the manner in which the bullying issue is being dealt with they can follow the parental complaints procedure.

6. 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:

Ref. Section 6.5 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

- Pupils will be explicitly taught what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- Key respect messages will be displayed in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Pupils will be involved in the development of these messages.
- A "Catch them being good" policy will be adopted in the school. Desired respectful behaviour will be recognized and acknowledged.
- 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 will be banned and actively discouraged if and when it occurs.
- Constructive feedback will be given to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- A system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines will be in place. e.g. Golden time, Time in the Sun, Homework Passes, Golden Leaf Awards.
- Pupils will be explicitly taught about the appropriate use of social media especially in the Senior Classes e.g. Internet Safety Day, Webwise, Social Stories, Stay Safe, School Film
- All staff will ensure that pupils comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use. ref. Code of Behaviour.
- There will be follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.
- Parents and/or the Parents' Association will be made aware of awareness raising campaigns around social media e.g. invite speakers to address the Association on the issue of Cyber Bullying.
- The right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school will be promoted.

- School rules will be highlighted and explicitly taught in pupil friendly language in the classroom, during Weekly Assembly and in common areas.
- All staff will watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- There will be adequate playground/schoolyard/outdoor supervision.
- School staff will enlist help of pupils in identifying bullying "hotspots" and "hottimes" for bullying in the school.

Hotspots tend to be in the playground/schoolyard/outdoor areas, changing rooms, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision.

Hot times again tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when pupils are in the playground/schoolyard or moving classrooms.

- A Student Council will be set up each year. The Council will be led by 6th class. Link pupils will be assigned to each class. Due to ongoing Covid-19 restrictions and practices, it will not be feasible for Communication Boxes to be placed in each classroom for the reporting of bullying or inappropriate behaviour and for class reps from the council to liaise with the classes. This will be reviewed throughout the year in line with changing guidelines and recommendations.

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

Ref. Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools

1. Any parent, pupil or other adult who has contact with the pupils may bring a bullying concern to any teacher in the school.
2. All reports, including anonymous reports, of bullying will be investigated. Pupils will be encouraged to "tell".
3. Individual teachers will take responsibility for investigating/dealing with the reported/alleged incident as set out in Section 4 above.
4. The Principal will be informed of the report/allegation.
5. The teacher, accompanied by another member of staff, will interview the alleged victim outside of the classroom setting to ensure privacy.
6. The teacher, accompanied by another member of staff, will interview the alleged bully/bullies
7. The teacher will interview any witnesses to the incident.
8. The teacher will exercise his/her professional judgment to determine whether bullying has taken place.

9. Teacher with responsibility for dealing/investigating with the report/alleged incident will inform all other staff that the children involved must be monitored specifically on yard for the duration of the investigation and 20 days after its conclusion.
10. Parents and pupils will be required to co-operate with any investigation with a view, as far as is possible, to restoring the relationships of the parties involved.
11. Teachers will adopt a calm, unemotional approach when dealing with any investigation/incident.
12. Interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all concerned.
13. Each member of a group will be supported through the possible pressures that they may face them from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher.
14. Where appropriate or helpful those involved will be asked to write down their account of the incident(s).
15. In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved will 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 will give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils.
16. In cases where it is established that bullying behaviour 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. The attached recording template will be used and a copy supplied to the Principal.
17. 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 the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts will be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
18. It will also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school.
19. Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved may 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. This can have a therapeutic effect.
20. In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded by the relevant teacher in the 'Anti-Bullying Record Book' (in the bottom drawer of the small filing cabinet in the Principal's office). Bullying incidents will also be referenced under the pupils name on Aladdin.
21. 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 parents or the school Principal

22. Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's Complaints Procedures (attached)

23. In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

24. Where it is established that bullying behaviour is part of a continuum of behaviour rather than a stand-alone issue, and where the behaviour of the pupil is unmanageable in the school, the advice of the National Education Psychological Service will be sought. The school's Code of Behaviour will be invoked. Parents will be invited to meet with the Chairperson of the Board of Management and asked to give an undertaking that their child will behave in an acceptable manner which will respect the rights of all pupils and staff members.

25. Serious cases will be reported to the HSE.

8. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows (Ref. Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*) :

9. A programme of supports for pupils who have been affected by bullying will be put in place. These supports will be made available to children who have been bullied and who have engaged in bullying behaviour. School based support will be offered to the pupil.

- The pupils will be encouraged to participate in activities to raise their self-esteem. This will involve identifying areas of strength for the pupil and affording them opportunities to experience success in these areas as well as opportunities to be affirmed in front of peers. The class teacher of the pupil concerned will engage in fun activities to help them manage their feelings and equip them with the relevant skills to move on from the situation.
- Opportunities will be offered to develop friendships by identifying children of similar disposition and interests.
- Social skills will be explicitly taught individually and in appropriate groups. These may be taught through age-appropriate social stories.

- Skills such as play skills, co-ordination skills etc will be taught in order to facilitate easy integration for pupils in group situations.
- Circle Time will be used to encourage pupils to have a voice and to deal with conflict through discussion rather than aggression.
- All pupils will be taught about rights and responsibilities.
- Where pupils continue to experience low self-esteem, parents will be advised to seek professional counselling.

10. 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.

11. 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.

12. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____

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

14. 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 (CAIRDEAS). A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Róisín O'Regan (Chairperson)

Orla O'Shea (Principal)

This policy will be revised in Oct. 2022