



Scoil Mhuire, Scoil Bhríde, Scoil Eoin Phóil

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 Boards of Management of **Scoil Bhríde, Scoil Eoin Phóil and Scoil Mhuire** have adopted the following anti bullying policy within the framework of the schools' 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. The purpose of these procedures is to give direction and guidance to school authorities and school personnel in preventing and tackling school based bullying behaviour amongst its pupils and in dealing with any negative impact within school of bullying behaviour that occurs elsewhere.
2. The Boards of Management recognise the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and are 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; 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/transgender 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.

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 physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying
- cyber-bullying and
- Identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

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

However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

Cyber-bullying: Access to technology means that cyber-bullying can happen around the clock and the pupil's home may not even be a safe haven from such bullying. Pupils are increasingly communicating in ways that are often unknown to adults and 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. The school will therefore endeavour to prevent such 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.

Adults in the school environment may unwittingly or otherwise engage in, instigate or reinforce bullying behaviour. Issues arising in these circumstances will be dealt with under the schools' complaints procedures. (*see schools' Code of Behaviour*).

Below are listed some examples of bullying behaviour. This is not an exhaustive list. Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the *Anti Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary School* (www.education.ie).

Examples of bullying behaviours

<p>General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 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 · The “look” · Invasion of personal space · A combination of any of the types listed.
<p>Cyber</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Denigration: Spreading rumors, lies or gossip to hurt a person’s reputation · Harassment: Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual · Impersonation: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person’s name · Flaming: Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight · Trickery: Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online · Outing: Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information / images / photographs / videos. · Exclusion: Purposefully excluding someone from an online group · Cyber stalking: Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 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
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).	
Homophobic and Transgender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation · 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
Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 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
Relational	<p>This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Malicious gossip · Isolation & exclusion · Ignoring · Excluding from the group · Taking someone's friends away · "Bitching" · Spreading rumours · Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear · The "look"

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Use of terminology such as ‘nerd’ in a derogatory way
Sexual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching · Harassment
Special Educational Needs, Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · 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

4. The relevant teacher for investigating and dealing with bullying is as follows;

- The class teacher(s) initially. (Any teacher may act as relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it)
- The Principal thereafter if necessary.

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:

- *Strategies to raise awareness of all aspects of bullying.*
- *Strategies to build empathy, respect and resilience.*
- *Strategies to build self-esteem and self-worth.*
- *Strategies to ensure that appropriate web-filtering is in place when pupils are accessing technology within the school.*
- *The full and comprehensive delivery of SPHE programmes within the school based on the themes of ‘Myself’, ‘Myself and Others’ and ‘Myself and the wider World’.*
- *The fullest possible integration and inclusion of SEN pupils within the school community.*
- *The fostering of positive interpersonal values as contained in the school’s mission statement to underpin and support respect for all within the school community.*
- *Regular reminders delivered at school assemblies and in individual classes of the important school rules regarding the prevention of bullying behaviour.*
- *Organising, in conjunction with the Parent Teacher Association, local Gardaí and other agencies, talks and seminars for pupils and parent(s)/guardians on bullying issues particularly in relation to the appropriate use of social media.*

- *Providing a varied and fully rounded curricular experience where pupils have opportunities to be valued and grow in confidence with their peers.*
- *Providing opportunities for pupils to be involved in sporting and/or other extra-curricular activities where the values of team-work, good sportsmanship, co-operation and collaboration can be strengthened.*
- *Modelling respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.*
- *Explicitly teaching what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like; acts like; sounds like; feels like in class and around the school.*
- *Displaying key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school.*
- *Providing positive attention towards, and acknowledgement of, desired respectful behaviour through a system of rewards.*
- *Consistently tackling the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school.*
- *Actively watching out for signs of bullying behaviour.*
- *Ensuring that there is adequate supervision of classrooms, corridors, playgrounds and school yard.*

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

- (i) The relevant teacher in investigating and dealing with bullying will attempt to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame);*
- (ii) The teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;*
- (iii) The teacher will investigate and deal with all reports, including anonymous reports, of bullying. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly;*
- (iv) Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;*
- (v) Parent(s)/Guardians and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible;*
- (vi) It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parent(s)/guardians) understand the above approach from the outset;*
- (vii) Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parent(s)/guardians;*

(viii) Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;

(ix) All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way;

(x) When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non aggressive manner;

(xi) If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements;

(xii) 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 teacher;

(xiii) It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s);

(xiv) In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parent(s)/guardians 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)/guardians 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;

(xv) Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;

(xvi) It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parent(s)/guardians) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parent(s)/guardians and the school;

(xvii) Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable. This can have a therapeutic effect;

(xviii) 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 school recording sheet.

(xix) 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; and*
- *Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardians or the school Principal or Deputy Principal.*

(xx) Where parent(s)/guardians are not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, these parent(s)/guardians must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures;

(xxi) In the event that parent(s)/guardians have exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise them of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

7. Procedures for Recording of bullying behaviour:

- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher who must keep a written record of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.
- If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher 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. (**Record of Bullying incident/s**) (white sheet)
- Copy of '**Record of Bullying Incident/s**' must be sent to the Principal.
- The relevant teacher must use the '**Record of Bullying Incident/Unresolved**' (yellow sheet) to record the bullying behaviour 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;
- At least once every school term the Principal will provide a report to the Board of Management setting out:
 1. The overall number of bullying cases reported by means of the **Record of Bullying Incident/Unresolved**' (yellow sheet) since the previous report to the Board and
 2. Confirmation that all of these cases have been or are being dealt with in accordance with this policy.
- The Board of Management must undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation by the schools. Written notification that the review has been completed must be made available to school personnel, published on the school's website and provided to the Parent Teacher Association. A record of the review and its outcome must be made available, if requested, to the Patron and the Department of Education and Skills.

In all instances the recording sheets mentioned above (white and yellow sheets) must be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the

Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable. It should also be noted that the timeline for recording bullying behaviour in the recording template does not in any way preclude the relevant teacher from consulting the Principal or Deputy Principal at an earlier stage in relation to a case.

8. The school's programme of support for working with all parties affected by bullying is as follows:

- *Opportunities will be provided where necessary for such pupils to engage in discussion with teacher(s)/parent(s)/guardians/peers in a supportive, non judgmental setting to express their feelings in relation to the bullying incident(s).*
- *Opportunities will be provided for such pupils to participate in activities designed to raise self-esteem; revision of lessons from SPHE programme and other such elements of the curriculum.*
- *Opportunities will be provided for such pupils to develop friendship and social skills through participation in a variety of in-class and extra-curricular activities; role plays, discussion groups, debates, team challenges, drama.*
 - *Positive reinforcement will be afforded to such pupils to enhance feelings of self worth in relation to both academic and social endeavours within school. ➤ Referral to counselling services will be provided for such pupils as needed: NEPS, CAMHS, HSE, GP, and Gardaí.*

9. 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.

10. 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.

11. Ratification by Board of Management;

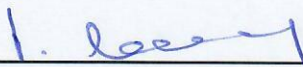
This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 8th April 2014.

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

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

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

This policy was reviewed by the Board of Management on November 27th 2023

Signed  Date: 27/11/23
Chairperson Board of Management