Scoil Bhríde

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Anti-Bullying Policy

**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 Bhríde 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) 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;
* Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.
* Explicitly teach pupils 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 pupils in the development of these messages.
* Catch them being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
* 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 pupil 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.
* Acknowledge the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment.
* Acknowledge the uniqueness of each individual and his/her worth as a human being
* Promote qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among all pupils both in and out of school.

(B) Effective leadership

(C) A school-wide approach

(D)A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact

(E) Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that-

* build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
* explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.

(F) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils

(G) Supports for staff

(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* 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
* 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.

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school’s code of behaviour.

This definition includes a wide range of behavior, whether verbal or written, whether physical or social, whether targeting person or property, whether carried out directly or indirectly or through any electronic or other medium, which could harm a pupil or undermine her/his self-esteem or self confidence.

**The following is a list of examples of bullying behaviours – this list is not exhaustive.**

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| **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 |
| **Cyber** | * **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 * **Outing**: Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images * **Cyber stalking**: 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 * **Primary school children under the age of 13 should not have a Face book page - it is illegal** |
| **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** | * 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** | * 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** | This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:   * Malicious gossip * Isolation & exclusion * Ignoring * Excluding from the group * Taking someone’s friends away * “Bitching” * Spreading rumours * Breaking confidence * Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear * Use or terminology such as ‘nerd’ in a derogatory way |
| **Sexual** | * Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching * Harassment |
| **Special 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 |

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

The Principal, The Deputy Principal, all Class Teachers, Resource and Learning Support Teachers.Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

**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

* A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.
* The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Pupils will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.
* 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 relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.
* There are a number of curriculum components and programmes which are particularly relevant to the prevention of bullying and the promotion of respect for diversity and inclusiveness. The SPHE curriculum makes specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the inter-related areas of belonging and integration, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships. The Stay Safe, Walk Tall and RSE programmes at primary level are personal safety skills programmes which seek to enhance children’s self protection skills including to recognise and cope with bullying.
* There is space within the teaching of all subjects to foster an attitude of respect for all: to promote the value of diversity: to address prejudice and stereotyping and to highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour. In English, there is a wide range of literature available which could be used to stimulate discussion. The work could be extended into many other areas such as Art, Drama, Religious Education, and Physical Education. Co-operation and group enterprise can be promoted through team sports, school clubs and committees as well as through practical subjects. Sporting activities in particular can provide excellent opportunities for channelling and learning how to control aggression.
* Educating pupils on internet safety through “Webwise Primary School Teachers” programme
* Invite local Gardai to speak at “Parents Association “ meeting to cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying.
* Annual anti-bullying/friendship day
* The school will implement an Anti-Bullying Campaign Programme by Séan Fallon: [www.antibullyingcampaign.ie](http://www.antibullyingcampaign.ie):

The programme involves awareness raising exercises for each class group form 3rd – 6th Class. These exercises proactively explain the nature and variety, causes, consequences and the unacceptability of bullying

(a)Pupils are helped to examine the issue of bullying in a calm rational way, outside of the tense context of particular bullying incidents. In the process they are made more aware of the nature of bullying and the various forms that it can take.

(b)Pupils are made aware that the consequences of bullying behaviour are always bad for those who are targeted, even if this is not always obvious at this time.

(c) Pupils are encouraged to recognise, reject and report bullying behaviour, either spontaneously or through questionnaires that are regularly used in the school.

**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:

**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 (rather than to apportion blame);**

**Reporting bullying behaviour**

* Any pupil 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 teacher.
* Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

**Investigating and dealing with incidents**

* The “Relevant Teacher” investigates all instances of reported or suspected bullying behaviour, with a view to establishing the facts and bringing any such behaviour to an end.
* The school, through the “Relevant Teacher” reserved the right to ask any pupil to write an account of what happened, as part of an investigation.
* Pupils who are alleged to have been involved in bullying behaviour are interviewed by the “Relevant Teacher” to establish the nature and extent of the behaviour and any reasons for it. In the event that they have been involved in bullying behaviour they asked to sign a binding promise that they will treat all pupils fairly, equal and respectfully including the targeted pupil(s).
* The “Relevant Teacher” does not apportion blame but rather treats bullying behaviour as a “mistake” that can and must be remedied. S/he emphasises that the intention is not to punish perpetrators but to talk to them, to explain how harmful and hurtful bullying is and to seek a promise that it will stop. If that promise is forthcoming and is honoured there will be no penalty and that will be the end of the matter. Pupils who report bullying therefore are not getting others “in trouble” so much as enabling them to get out of trouble into which they may ultimately get if the bullying continued.
* When an investigation is completed and/or a bullying situation is resolved the “Relevant Teacher “will complete a report, to include the findings of the investigation, the strategy adopted and the outcome of the intervention, as well as any other relevant information.
* If a pupil has signed such a promise but then chooses to break that promise and continue the bullying behaviour, this can then no longer be considered a “mistake”. In this event parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed and requested to countersign their daughter/son’s promise. Breach of this additional promise by further bullying behaviour is regarded as a very grave matter and the following sanction will be imposed: The pupil will not be allowed on the next school outing. If the bullying behaviour still continues the BOM may consider suspension.
* In any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his/her parent(s)/Guardian(s) and the school.

**Recording of bullying behaviour**

The school’s procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour must adhere to the following:

(i) While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher will use his/her professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same;

(ii) 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.

(iii) The relevant teacher must use the recording template at **Appendix 3** to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

a) 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.

b) Where the school has decided that any of the bullying behaviours listed above are of a serious nature.

All records must be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. Any cases reported and recorded in the appendix 3 template must be reported to the Board of Management.

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

The school’s programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying involves discussing the incidents with the pupils, reassuring them that they were right to bring the vents to the attention of the staff, that they were not telling tales and their actions will help others. They will be reminded that they should tell again if they have any further concerns. The teacher involved and the Principal will check from time to time with the child that everything is ok. Given the complexity of bullying, no one intervention/support programme works in all situations. Therefore various approaches and intervention strategies may be used including suggesting that parents seek referrals so that appropriate outside agencies in order to receive further support for the pupils and their families if needed.

**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.** This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 2nd April 2014

**11.** 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.

**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 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.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

(Chairperson of Board of Management) (Principal)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date of next review: \_April 2015