

Anti- Bullying Policy

Scoil Bhríde

Clane

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;

At Scoil Bhríde we consider the following to be key elements of a positive school culture.

- We acknowledge the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment.
- We acknowledge the uniqueness of each individual and their worth as a human being.
- We promote positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline, and responsibility among all our students.
- We actively prohibit vulgar, offensive, sectarian or other aggressive behaviour by any of our members.
- We identify aspects of the curriculum through which positive and sustainable influences can be exerted towards forming pupils' attitudes and values.
- We take particular care of 'at risk' pupils.
- We in Scoil Bhríde recognise the need to work in partnership with and keep parents informed on procedures to improve relationships within the school community.
- We promote habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the interdependence of people in groups and communities.

- We promote qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among our students both in school and outside school.

b) Effective leadership;

- The BOM has overall responsibility to ensure that this policy is effective, sustainable and measured.
- The ISM team have a clear role to act in a Leadership capacity within the school community, stimulating a whole school approach to preventing and tackling bullying.
- Teachers must act as good role models and be fair, clear and consistent in their discipline measures.

c) A school-wide approach;

- A whole school approach to the problem of bullying is required – management, teachers, non-teaching staff, pupils, parents/ guardians.
- Beyond the school community, bullying behaviour may extend to outside the school. Where this negatively impacts on the school – parents and pupils have a responsibility to support the school in helping to address the issue. This applies particularly (but not exclusively) to cyber bullying.
- The assistance of the Gardaí, Tusla and Community workers may be required in some cases.

d) A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;

- Scoil Bhríde endeavours to put in place appropriate systems to ensure that ALL relevant members of the school community (parents, pupils, staff and wider community) have a shared understanding of what constitutes bullying behaviour as defined in this policy.

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;

- Staff members have a distinct responsibility to ensure that supervision of pupils in class is effective and consistent.
- Supervision in playground areas are managed and conducted effectively.

g) Supports for staff;

- Regular discussion and review of policy and procedures is essential to support staff.
- CPD in relation to Anti- Bullying will be supported and encouraged for all members of staff.

h) Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and

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 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.

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*.

Examples of bullying behaviours

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**
- **The ‘look’**
- **Invasion of personal space**
- **A combination of any of the types listed.**

Cyber

- **Denigration:** Spreading rumours, 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 or images.
- **Exclusion:** Purposefully excluding someone from an online group
- **Cyber Stalking:** Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/ her safety.
- Silent telephone/ mobile phone calls.
- Abusive telephone/ mobile phone calls
- Abusive text messages
- Abusive email
- Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook, twitter, what’s app, snapchat, game 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).

- 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, 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 and exclusion
- Ignoring
- Excluding from the group
- Taking someone's friends away
- 'Bitching'
- Spreading rumours
- Breaking confidence
- Talking loud enough so the victim can hear
- The 'look'
- Use of terminology such as 'nerd' in a derogatory way.

Sexual

- Unwelcome or inappropriate comments or touching
- Harassment

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

Raising the Awareness of Bullying As a Form of Unacceptable Behaviour.

Each school must raise the awareness of bullying in its school community so that they are more alert to its harmful effects. {Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour in primary and Post-Primary Schools, 1993}.

The following are some of the practical ways that we in Scoil Bhríde can emphasise that bullying behaviour is unacceptable, e.g.

Raising awareness – Parents

- a) Look for unusual behaviour in your children - for example, they may suddenly not wish to attend school, feel ill regularly, or not complete work to their normal standard.
- b) Always take an active role in your child's education. Enquire how their day has gone; who have they spent time with, how lunchtime was spent etc.
- c) If your child feels that she is being bullied, talk it through with her and try to get the full story (remember there are two sides to every story).
- d) If you feel your child may be a victim of bullying behaviour, inform the class teacher **IMMEDIATELY**. Your complaint will be taken seriously and appropriate action will be taken.
- e) It is important to advise your daughter not to fight back – it may make matters worse.
- f) Tell your daughter that there is nothing wrong with her. It is not her fault that she is being bullied.
- g) Make sure that your daughter is fully aware of the school policy concerning bullying, and that she should not be afraid to ask for help.

Raising awareness – In school

During September and throughout the year some of the following ideas may be addressed in the classroom depending upon the age level of the children and the teacher's own discretion.

- Class Rules – each class to develop their own Class Rules and display them on the wall for the school year.
- While everyone can't be 'best friends' stress the importance of being friendly and showing respect to all.
- Books in library on topics related to bullying.
- "Stay Safe"
- Religion – Grow in Love
- Posters – Art displays promoting friendship.
- Co- operative games in PE
- SPHE
- Promote self esteem
- Assembly – The Principal will discuss bullying and promote friendship, kindness and respect at assemblies.

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows: (see Section 6.8.3 and 6.8.4 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.)

- Principal
- Deputy Principal
- All Class Teachers
- SEN Teachers

The Class Teacher will deal with a report of Bullying initially. If there are children from other classes involved all the relevant teachers will work together to deal with the situation initially. The principal will be informed of all cases of bullying behavior as she may have knowledge of previous incidents. The principal will investigate the what, when, where, who and why and will make a note of the incident. This will be in the format of a factual written record of the discussions with those involved. The parents/guardians may have access to these written accounts {names will be deleted}. Parents will always be informed if their child has been involved in bullying.

5. The following 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

- A school wide approach to the fostering and respect for all members of the school community.
- The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- The fostering and enhancing 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.
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parents/ guardians.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parent(s)/guardian(s) are informed about all school policies and their availability upon enrolment. It is the responsibility of parents and guardians to familiarise themselves with all policies.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extracurricular 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.
- Involvement of the Student Council in contributing to a safe school environment.
- In our approach to tackle and prevent bullying we will take particular account of the needs of pupils with disabilities or with SEN. We will focus on improving inclusion, developing social skills, cultivating a positive culture which has respect for all and where helping one another is central. We will focus strongly on supporting the child at transition from Primary to Post-Primary.
- The implementation of regular whole school awareness measures e.g. Noticeboard on the promotion of friendship and bullying prevention.
- Parents/ Guardians seminars organised by the PA. Regular school assemblies by the Principal or Deputy Principal.
- Encourage a culture of telling, with a particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'.
- Ensure that pupils know who to tell and how to tell
 - Direct approach to a teacher
 - Hand up note with homework
 - A worry box
 - Get a parent/ guardian or a friend to tell on your behalf.
 - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.

(B) Implementation of the Curricula

- The full implementation of the SPHE and the RSE and Stay Safe Programme.
- Weaving Well Being will be taught in 2nd to 6th class.
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE programme at Primary level. These lessons delivered by Community Gardaí cover issues around personal safety and cyber bullying.

- We will continue to educate our pupils on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while online and on developing a culture of reporting any concerns about cyber-bullying. This will be supported through the use of webwise.ie. We will also be conscious of the scope for cyber-bullying to occur as a result of access to technology from within the school.

6. Procedures for investigation and dealing with bullying.

The primary aim for the teacher/principal 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 apportion blame;

The schools procedures must be consistent with the following approach.

Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (pupils, parents/guardians) understand this approach from the outset.

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 (SNA's), bus escorts, caretakers must report any incidents of bullying behavior witnessed by them or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

Investigating and Dealing with Incidents

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher or principal will exercise her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
- Parents 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;
- We will aim to ensure that all involved, including each set of pupils and parents, will understand our approach from the outset;
- Teachers and principal will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behavior reported by pupils, staff or parents;
- Where possible incidents are generally best 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 pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide useful information.
- When analyzing incidents of bullying behavior, the principal will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This will be done in a calm manner, setting an example of dealing effectively with conflict in a non-aggressive manner;

- If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved will be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member will be asked for her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements;
- Each member of the group will be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher;
- It may also be helpful or appropriate to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident/s;
- In cases where it has been determined by the teacher or principal that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the children involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken by reference to our school policy. We will give parents an opportunity to discuss ways in which they can reinforce and support the actions being taken by the school;
- Where a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour it will be made clear to her how she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts will be made to get her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;
- *It must 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, her parents and the school;*

Follow Up and Recording

- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the following factors must be taken into account:
 - Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased.
 - Whether the issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable.
 - Whether the relationship between the parties has been restored as far as is practicable; and
 - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal;
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved will 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;
- In cases where the teacher/principal considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded in the recording template, {Appendix 3};
- **Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a case of bullying in accordance with these procedures, the parent will be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaint procedures;**
- In the event that the 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.**

Procedures for recording bullying behaviour.

Scoil Bhríde has clear procedures for the formal noting and recording of bullying behaviour. All records will be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation.

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

The schools 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 of bullying witnessed by them or notified to them. All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher.
- While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher must keep a written record of the reports, the actions taken and the discussions with those involved regarding same.
- **The relevant teacher must inform the principal of all incidents being investigated.**

Formal Stage 1: Determination that Bullying has occurred

- If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must keep appropriate written records which will assist her efforts to resolve the issues and restore as far as possible , the relationships of the parties involved.

Formal Stage 2: Appendix 3 (From DES Procedures)

The relevant teacher must use the recording template attached to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances.

- (a) In cases where she considers that the bullying behavior has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after she has determined that the bullying behavior occurred.
- (b) All confirmed instances of bullying behavior must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal.

The recording template must be maintained by the teacher a copy retained by the Principal.

Teachers records are retained in a teachers locked filing cabinet.

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

Such pupils may need counselling and/or opportunities to participate in activities to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed.

The parents will be aware of the situation so they will be in a strong position to fully support their child. Parents will be encouraged to keep the lines of communication open at home.

Whole school/class lessons will be covered dealing with respect, self-esteem, the issue of bullying, cyber-bullying, etc...

The child will be praised for telling and will be encouraged to tell again if the bullying is repeated.

The class teacher and all staff members will monitor the situation.

Our S.P.H.E. programme will be implemented to increase the self-esteem of the victim and the bully.

Ensure as far as is possible that the victim has the support of friends.

Provide the victims with strategies to deal with bullying, role-play to give them the skills and confidence to deal with conflict.

Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them to learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.

Help the bully by making them aware of their behaviour and its consequences.

Use of Circle Time.

To ensure that our anti-bullying policy is effective there must be appropriate linkage with the overall code of behaviour and provide for referral to be made to relevant external agencies and authorities where appropriate.

We will at all times follow the recommendations from “Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011 [Children First} and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools.

In cases where there are concerns about a child/children but it is unclear whether or not to report the matter to the Tusla, the Designated Liaison Person must seek advice from the Tusla.

In cases where there are serious concerns in relation to managing the behaviour of a pupil, the principal will seek the advice of the National Educational Psychological Service [NEPS].

In cases where the incident is serious and the behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive the principal will consult Tusla with a view to drawing up an appropriate response, such as a management plan. There may be incidents that warrant the involvement of the Gardaí.

For cases of adult bullying the procedures as outlined in the INTO/Management Bodies publication ‘Working together Procedures and Policies for Positive Staff Relations’ will be followed.

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.

- There are agreed supervision and monitoring policies and practices in place.
- Mobile phones must be surrendered to the teacher during the school day 9.00 to 2.40pm.
- Mobile phones are not permitted on school tours.

- Pupils will be involved as a resource to assist in counteracting bullying through the student council.

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 14th October 2014. It was reviewed by the staff on the 1st October 2019 and the Parents Association on the 8th October. The Student Council also had an input into the policy.

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: _____ Date: _____

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _____ Date: _____

(Principal)