Scoil Mhuire Naofa, Rathfeigh   17964K
Anti- Bullying Policy

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines by the NEWB, the Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire Naofa, Rathfeigh has adoped 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 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 (Appendix 1) 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 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 a homophobic bullying, transphobic 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* and appears as Appendix 2 of this document.

4. The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:

   - The class teacher
   - The principal

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(see Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools);***

   - Prevention and awareness raising measures 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.
   - Provide pupils with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through both their curricular and extra-curricular programmes because we recognise that self-esteem is a major factor in determining behaviour.
   - Prevention and awareness raising measures focusing on cyber-bullying by educating pupils on appropriate online behaviour and on how to stay safe while online
   - Teachers can influence attitudes to bullying behaviour in a positive manner
   - The Stay Safe and RSE Programme will be fully implemented by the school. The Stay Safe and RSE programmes at primary level are personal safety skills programmes which seek to enhance children's self-protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying.

- The holding of an annual 'Anti-Bullying Week' and 'Friendship Week'.
- Through presentations or other exercises, the school staff and parents/guardians are made aware of the nature of bullying and the signs that might indicate that a pupil is being bullied.
- All teachers are required to be vigilant on yard duty – record all incidences – monitor repeat offenders.
- The Board of Management will make appropriate arrangements to ensure that temporary and substitute staff have sufficient awareness of the school's Code of Behaviour and its Anti-Bullying Policy.

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 (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):**

- All reports, of bullying will be investigated initially by the class teacher(s). In that way, pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. 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.
- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the class teacher(s) will exercise his/her/their professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred.
- If the class teacher suspects that bullying may have occurred the principal will be informed.
- On being informed of an alleged incident of bullying, the principal and class teacher will first interview the victim(s) and discuss the feelings which the victim(s) experienced because of bullying.
- Interview with the alleged perpetrator. The interview should be conducted sensitively with due regard to the rights of the pupil concerned. The relevant teachers 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.
- 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 others statements.
- Where the relevant teachers have determined that a pupil has 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 should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teachers that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved will be contacted and informed of the matter and the actions taken explained.
- It will be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situations where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school.
- 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.
- 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.

● In an 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.

RECORDING:
The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour will adhere to the following:

(1) While all reports, of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teachers, the relevant teachers will use their professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.
(2) If it is established by the relevant teachers that bullying has occurred, the relevant teachers 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.
(3) The relevant teachers will use the recording template at Appendix 3 to record the bullying behaviour.

All records must be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation.

7. **The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows.**
   - Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the speedy identification of those responsible and speedy resolution of bullying situations.
   - Making adequate counselling facilitators available to pupils who need it in a timely manner.
   - Helping bullied pupils raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra curricular activities during or after school)
   - Follow up meetings with pupils on an ongoing basis following any incident of bullying.

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.

   This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 7th April, 2014.

10. 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.

11. 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 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:_____
Maire Kennedy.   Seamus Tansley.
(Chairperson of Board of Management)   (Principal)

Date:_____   Date:_____

Date of next review: September 2023.

Appendix 1 Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate

The following are some practical tips for immediate actions that can be taken to help a positive school culture and climate and to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour.

- 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.
- Consistently tackle 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.
- Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour respectful language are absent.
- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.
- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.
- Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use.
- Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.
- Actively involve parents and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media.
- 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.
- School staff can get pupils to help them to identify bullying "hot spots" and "hot times" for bullying in the school.

    * Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas, changing rooms, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision.
    * Hot times tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when pupils are in the playground/school yard or moving classrooms.
- Support the establishment and work of student councils.

Appendix 2 : Types of bullying

Bullying can take a number of forms. These may include any of the following (this list is not exhaustive).

Physical aggression: This behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While pupils often engage in 'mess fights', they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment of inflicting pain.
Intimidation: Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation. It may be based on the use of very aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon. Particularly upsetting can be a facial expression which conveys aggression and/or dislike.
Isolation/exclusion and other relational bullying: This occurs where a certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or all of the class group. This practice is usually initiated by the person engaged in bullying behaviour and can be difficult to detect. It may be accompanied by writing insulting remarks about the pupil in public places, by passing around notes about or drawings of the pupil or by whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard. Relational bullying occurs when a person's attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repetedly rejected or undermined. One of the most common forms includes control: 'Do this or I won't be your friend anymore' (implied or stated), a group ganging up against one person (girls or boy), non-verbal gesturing, malicious gossip, spreading rumours about a person or giving them the 'silent treatment'.
Cyber-bullying: This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, email, instant messaging (IM), apps, gaming sites, chat rooms and other online technologies. Being the target of inappropriate or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying. As cyber-bullying uses technology to perpetrate bullying behaviour and does not require face-to-face-contact, cyber bllying can occur at any time (day or night). Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyber-bullying. For example, a target may be sent homophobic text messages or pictures may be posted with negative comments about a person's sexuality, appearance etc.
Name calling: Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) that hurts, insults or humiliates should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name calling of this type refers to physical appearance, e.g. size of clothes worn. Accent or distinctive voice characteristics may attract negative attention. Academic ability can also provoke name calling. This tends to operate at two extremes. There are those who are singled out for attention because they are perceived to be weak academically. At the other extreme there are those who, because they are perceived as high achievers are also targeted.
Damage to property: Personal property can be the focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices school books and other learning material or interference with pupils locker or bicycle. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.
Extortion: Demands for money may be made, often accompanied by threats (sometimes carried out in the event of the targeted pupil not delivering on the demand). A pupil may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to another who is engaged in bullying behaviour.

Appendix 3: Template for recording bullying behaviour (Scoil Mhuire Naofa Rathfeigh 17964K)

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(s)	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

4. Location of incidents – tick relevant box(es)

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
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. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact
_____
_____
_____
_____

8. Details of actions taken
_____
_____
_____
_____

 Signed:_____   Date:_____

Signed: _____   Date:_____
         (Relevant Teachers)

Date submitted to Principal:_____