

**Scoil N. Mhuire**

**Anti-Bullying Policy**

1. This policy is designed to assist Scoil N. Mhuire in devising school-based measures to prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to increase awareness of bullying behaviour in the school community as a whole (eg school management, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents, as well as those from the local community who interact with the school). Involving and encouraging all the members of the school community in developing, formulating and reviewing this policy on bullying promotes partnership, ownership and implementation of a “living policy”, one which is actively implemented/promoted in the whole school community. The school climate and atmosphere are created by the actions of everyone in the school. The behaviour of the adults in a child’s life, including parents and teachers, is a significant influence on how a child acts.
2. 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 N. Mhuire, Cloneygowan, 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.**
3. 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;

*Please see Appendixes A and B*

**(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); and**

**(i) On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.**

1. 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,
* extortion and intimidation
* damage to property of another
* physical aggression to include pushing, punching, kicking, poking and tripping up people. It also may take the form of severe physical assault.
* cyber-bullying and bullying through misuse of technology
* identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person’s membership of the traveller community or an ethnic minority group 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. The school’s Acceptable Use policy is enforced, however, the school cannot supervise children’s internet use outside the school even though hurtful behaviour occurs.

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.* A list of examples of what could be seen as bullying behaviour (if consistent) is contained in Appendix C.

1. **Types of Bullying**
* **Physical Aggression:** Repeatedly pushing, pinching, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people up. We teach pupils not to hit back but to tell a teacher or adult straightaway if someone hits them.
* **Intimidation:** Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation, it may be based on the use of very aggressive body language.
* **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. Relational bullying occurs when a person’s attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined.
* **Cyber-bullying:** This type of bullying is increasingly common and continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, email, messaging, 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 bullying can occur at any time (day or night). Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyber-bullying. Pupils do not have access to social networking or messaging sites/apps in school, but parents are urged to be vigilant during out-of-school hours.
* **Verbal Bullying/ Name calling:**Repeated and persistent name-calling, which hurts, insults or humiliates is a form of bullying behaviour.
* **Damage to property:** Personal property can be the focus of attention for bullying behaviour. Items of personal property may be repeatedly defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.
* **Extortion:** Demands for money or other goods may be made.

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1. **The relevant teacher(s)** for investigating and dealing with bullying is normally the class teacher, however any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it. The principal and the LS (Learning Support)/Resource teachers may also be the relevant teacher. In the case of bullying by an adult, staff member/ parent the principal will act as relevant teacher. In the case where the Principal is involved, the Deputy Principal will act as relevant teacher.
2. **Education and Prevention Strategies**

 The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber- bullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person’s membership of the traveller community or another ethnic group and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs) that will be used by the school are contained in Appendix D.

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

1. 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 outlined in Appendix E. Records will be stored securely in the school until the child has reached the age of 21.

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

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| 1. In-school supports, training and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience e.g.
* Restorative Practice
* Incredible Years
* Friends For Life
* Weaving Wellbeing
* antibullyingcampaign.ie
* Webwise
* Group Work such as Circle Time – Jenny Mosley
* Buddy / Peer mentoring system eg Yard Buddies and Reading Buddies
* Anxiety and Wellbeing classes with SET
* RSE (Relationships and Sexuality Education) Programme
* SALT (Say, Ask, Listen ,Talk) Programme
* Stay Safe Programme
* Talkabout Series (Self Esteem and Building Relationships)

 If pupils require counselling of further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.  |
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1. **Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils**

In light of the above the Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent as far as possible, and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

Appropriate monitoring and supervision is provided for in Scoil N. Mhuire (5 adults on duty at break time with other staff on standby). Some bullying “danger spots” have been identified through teacher, pupil and parent consultation and measures are in place to counteract bullying “danger spots”.

Through the SPHE (Social Personal and Health Education) curriculum including RSE (Relationships and Sexuality Education), RE (Religious Education), IY (Incredible Years), Friends for Life, Yard Buddies, ABC (Anti-Bullying Campaign) etc students are supported in countering bullying behaviour. Senior pupils have been involved in SALT (Say, Ask, Listen, Talk), and in buddy systems and we have used senior pupils in counteracting bullying.

1. **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.

1. gender including transgender,
2. civil status,
3. family status,
4. sexual orientation,
5. religion,
6. age,
7. disability,
8. race/ ethnticity
9. membership of the traveller community.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year during the final term. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel. A copy of this policy will be readily accessible to parent(s)/ guardian(s) on request and provided to the Parents’ Association. A copy of this policy along with a record of any review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department of Education and Skills.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our other relevant school policies, practices and activities, e.g. Code of Discipline, Child Protection Policy, Supervision of Pupils, Acceptable Use policy, Attendance, Procedures for Trips Away.

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

 (Chairperson of Board of Management) (Principal)

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

Date of next review: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix A**

Incident Report Form

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Actions Taken in Response to Incident Report (Phone calls, consultations with students,

parents, teachers etc, warning, mediation, sanctions, Referral, SMT notified, other,

including outcomes).

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Name Class Teacher

**Appendix D**

**Possible Education and Prevention Strategies**

Prevention and awareness raising measures across all aspects of bullying involving strategies to engage pupils in addressing problems when they arise. In particular, such strategies need to build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils.

**School-wide approach**

* A school-wide approach to the fostering of 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 programmes “Incredible Years” and “Friends For Life” will be implemented in our school.
* 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.
* Whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develops an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils’ lives and the need to respond to it-prevention and intervention.
* An annual audit of professional development needs with a view to assessing staff requirements through internal staff knowledge/expertise and external sources
* Professional development, where available and possible, with specific focus on the training of the relevant teacher(s)
* School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community.
* 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.
* Involvement of the students in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Buddy system, mentoring, Lunchtime Pals and other student support activities that can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
* Review and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school-to be included in student journals and displayed publicly in classrooms and in common areas of the school.
* The school’s anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parents/guardians are given a copy as part of the Code of Discipline of the school upon admission.
* The implementation of regular whole school awareness measures e.g. a dedicated notice board in the school and classrooms on the promotion of friendship, and bullying prevention; eg annual Friendship Week, parents/guardians seminars; annual student surveys; regular school or year group assemblies by principal/deputy principal.
* Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. 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.
* Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell, e.g.:
* Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
* Hand note up with homework.
* Anti-bully or Worry Box
* Get a parent/guardian or friend to tell on your behalf.
* Administer a confidential questionnaire once a term to all pupils.
* Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
* We encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied.
* The implementation and monitoring of our “Internet Acceptable Use Policy” in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored, as is the pupils’ use of mobile phones and other devices.
* Sporting activities in Scoil N. Mhuire can provide excellent opportunities to promote inclusiveness and diversity. We enjoy GAA, rugby, athletics etc both during and outside school hours. Other activities such as art/crafts, knitting, chess etc are offered to our children.
* The listing of supports currently being used in the school and the identification of other supports available to the school e.g. SALT (stop, ask, listen.talk) www.saltprogramme.com, Friends for Life, [www.pathwayshrc.com.au](http://www.pathwayshrc.com.au) , Incredible Years, [www.incredibleyears.com](http://www.incredibleyears.com) , Anti Bullying Campaign, [www.antibullyingcampaign.ie](http://www.antibullyingcampaign.ie) is ongoing.

**Implementation of curricula**

* The full implementation of the SPHE (Social Personal Health Education) curricula and the RSE (Relationalships and Sexuality Education) , RE (Religious Education), Stay Safe and Friends For Life Programmes and reference to the Anti Bullying Campaign including strands 1 and 2 (primary) Awareness Raising section and Dealing with Incidents and reference to resources on www.bullyingawarenessweek.org
* Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
* School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes, e.g. Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme,
* We will invite the delivery of the Garda Schools Programmes. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardaí, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying
* The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN (Special Educational Needs) pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.

 **Links to other policies**

* This policy should be read in conjunction with our other relevant school policies, practices and activities, e.g. Code of Discipline, Child Protection Policy, Supervision of Pupils, Acceptable Use policy, Attendance, Procedures for Trips Away.

**Appendix E**

**Procedures for Investigating, recording 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;

The school’s procedures must be consistent with the following approach.

Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s)) understand this approach from the outset.

 **Reporting bullying behaviour**

* Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may report 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), football trainers, caretakers, must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;

**Investigating and dealing with incidents:**

* In investigating and dealing with bullying, the (relevant)teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
* Parent(s)/guardian(s) 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;
* Where possible incidents should be 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 very useful information in this way;
* 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;
* 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;
* Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after the interview by the teacher;

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

* In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parent(s)/guardian(s) 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 policies; Anti Bullying, Code of Discipline). The school should give parent(s)/guardian(s) an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the pupils;
* 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;
* It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parent(s)/guardian(s)) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school. The suggested steps and sanctions may include those outlined in Scoil N. Mhuire’s Code of Discipline.

**Follow up and recording**

* 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 parent(s)/guardian(s)s or the school Principal or Deputy Principal
* 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.
* Where a parent(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must be referred, as appropriate, to the school’s complaints procedures.
* In the event that a parent(s)/guardian(s) has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

**Recording of bullying behaviour**

It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner. The school’s 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 witnessed by them or notified to them. Consideration needs to be given to where the records will be made e.g. incident book. All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher
* While all 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 any 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 his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
* The school in consultation with the relevant teacher/s should develop a protocol for the storage of all records retained by the relevant teacher.

 **Formal Stage 2 (From DES Procedures)**

The relevant teacher must use the recording template at **Appendix F** to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

* 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; and
* where the school has decided as part of its anti-bullying policy that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

The school should list behaviours that must be recorded and reported immediately to the principal. These should be in line with the school’s code of behaviour.

When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal. These records will be stored in the Principal’s Office for a minimum term of 12 months.

**Established intervention strategies**

* Teacher interviews with all pupils
* Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process
* Working with parent(s)/guardian(s)s to support school interventions
* No Blame Approach
* Circle Time (a group of children sit in a circle for an activity involving everybody. Children take turns to speak and the circle’s confidence is not breached afterwards)
* Restorative interviews
* Restorative conferencing
* Implementing informal sociogram questionnaires (a questionnaire relating to a pupil’s socio groups eg who do I work well with, who do I play with etc)
* Peer mediation where suitable training has been given (Peer mediation is an internationally recognised programme of conflict resolution aimed at 5th/6th class children)