

ANTI BULLYING POLICY

DIGNITY FOR ALL



Scoil Chóca Naofa

Kilcock, Co. Kildare

**Our aim is
to provide a safe and caring environment
in which
all members of the school community
can develop to their full potential.**

The Board of Management
is committed to ensuring
**that all members of the school community
pupils, staff, and parents
can work in an atmosphere of friendship, respect and tolerance.**

Self-esteem is developed through
celebrating individual differences and achievements

Relationships within the school community
are based on mutual respect and trust
so that all members have confidence and trust in each other.

**THE MANAGEMENT AND STAFF OF SCOIL CHOCA NAOFA
do not tolerate or condone bullying of any form or at any level of the school community.**

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

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 Choca Naofa 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. This policy supersedes all previous Anti-Bullying policy documents published by the Board.

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;

(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. Although children may not understand the literal meaning of these terms they certainly know that the terms are very insulting ...discuss with the parents council ...parents will be asked to discuss certain terminology at home that their child uses in school... also see RSE policy about sensitive issues

(f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;

- (g) Supports for staff** (Lots of reading material on topic available on Internet, Bullying No Way is a good site)

(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. What is Bullying?

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 Be aware that teachers can be intimidated/harassed by groups of children & their parents
- 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. (important issue in our school)

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour. 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 will also be dealt with 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.

4. Relevant teachers

The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying in Scoil Choca Naofa will normally be the class teacher, but support teachers or the Principal may be involved

All members of the school community however have a role to play in the prevention of bullying. In the daily life and routines of the school the ways in which we interact with each other significantly affect each person's sense of self-worth, belonging and well-being. The fostering of good quality interpersonal relationships among teachers, students, parents and ancillary staff is a responsibility shared by us all.

The Board of Management: see 2 above;

Staff: implement prevention and intervention strategies that build a safe environment and empower students to deal with conflict in a constructive way; to take reports of bullying seriously and to document them appropriately

Pupils: to show consideration, respect and support towards each other and teachers; to engage in responsible reporting when they witness or experience bullying behaviour.

Parents: to support the school in the implementation of this policy; to instruct children to tell if they are being bullied or if they see others being bullied; to speak to the class teacher if they are aware of any issues that are affecting their child; to **ensure** that their child uses social media in a safe and responsible manner; to never directly approach a child or parent at the school about behavioural issues. Parents should be responsible for About home use of phone/tablets/etc.

5. Prevention strategies:

(a) The prevention of bullying is an integral part of our written anti-bullying policy. It takes into account the age and gender of our pupils. We regularly discuss what bullying is and how the school deals with bullying behaviour.

- School-wide awareness of the value of respect – adults should model the type of behaviour they promote in children
- The topic of bullying is discussed at every staff meeting
- Prevention: Supervision Rota provides adequately for indoor and outdoor supervision.
- School Rules; Positive Classroom Rules are devised by each class at the start of the year and referred to frequently by the teacher throughout the year
- “Rights and Responsibilities of the Child” Wall Chart prominently displayed
- Building a Positive school culture (appendix2)
- Encourage a culture of “telling” and ensuring that pupils who to tell and how to tell
- Awareness raising: Bullying Initiatives and programmes, talks for staff/pupils/parents on Stay Safe/Cyber-Bullying
- Building empathy and resilience
- Develop positive sense of self-worth.
- Cyber-bullying Programmes
- Identity-based bullying (homophobic and transphobic terms that children use are means of insult rather than specific; our RSE policy requires that parents are responsible for explanation of homophobic/transphobic specific terms. However, parents of children who use such terms will be informed immediately.)

(b) Approaches to decreasing the likelihood of bullying for pupils with SEN: improving inclusion, focusing on developing social skills, paying attention to key moments such as transitioning from primary to post-primary and cultivating a good school culture which has respect for all and helping one another as central.

(c) Bullying Awareness Day (maybe on same day as talk to 5th/6th classes – other classes make art/project/drama/etc. handouts to parents in yard, maybe talk to parents about our policy) will give the parents of a pupil who is being bullied the confidence to approach the school and also helps to send a clear message to the parents of a pupil who is engaged in bullying behaviour that they have a major responsibility in addressing their child’s behaviour.

(d) Teachers influence attitudes to bullying behaviour in a positive manner through a range of curricular initiatives. 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.

- SPHE curriculum makes specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the inter-related areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships.
- The Stay Safe programme is a personal safety skills programme which seeks to enhance children’s self-protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying. RSE provides opportunities to explore and discuss human sexuality and relationships, which has particular relevance to identity-based bullying.
- Other social, health and media education programmes can further help to address the problem of bullying behaviour. Walk Tall
- Cyber Bullying: Paula O’Connor (0876843850) Presentation to 5th/6th Classes (21st Jan 9.30-12.15) and subsidised by the Parents Association; “Stop the Bully” Programme;

(e) **Curriculum:** 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.

- English: Creative Writing, group writing the Anti-Bullying Policy in your own words; Conduct a survey
- Geography & History: Story-consequences of Bullying in Past, Bullying around the world, Differences in Cultures/Religions/etc
- Art: Posters, Making a frieze, Anti Bullying Badges
- Drama: Drama, Age appropriate Role Play – reflect on drama, “hot-seat” the victim/bully/onlooker, Recreate playground scenes/ walking home
- Religious Education: Stories that promote friendship and kindness.
- Physical Education: Team activities
- Co-operation and group enterprise is promoted through team sports (Camogie, Football, Athletics, Sports Day provide excellent opportunities for cooperation and learning how to control aggression. Project Work in all topics encourages collaboration and working to individual strengths
- Technology: Discuss the correct use of Media, Animation Programmes, Bullying No Way.gov.au, Anti-bullying Ireland,

6. Procedures for reporting Bullying

- Pupils are encouraged to report bullying behaviour as soon as possible
- Any pupil, parent/guardian or teacher may bring a bullying incident to the attention of the class teacher or Principal.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. 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; (this msg is strongly supported in stay safe programme)
- 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.

Procedures for investigating, dealing with and recording incidences of Bullying are 3 staged:

STAGE 1 – INFORMAL INVESTIGATION and ACTION

- The teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
- Teacher will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach (modelling appropriate behaviour of how we act when dealing with unpleasant situations) when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents

STAGE 1 - INFORMAL RECORDING

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.

STAGE 2 - FORMAL INVESTIGATION and ACTION

- 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;
- The parents 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 parents 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; (maybe a note to get parental support and make them aware
- It must also 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, his or her parents and the school;
- 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;
- Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation (on the corridor) 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;
- In such an investigation, another member of staff will/may be requested to assist.
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face them from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher;
- It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s);

STAGE 2 - FORMAL RECORDING

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. Sometimes agreement to differ on an opinion might be all that's possible. Asking children to stay away from each other is not great practice A notebook is provided to each teacher.

STAGE 3 - FORMAL INVESTIGATION

- 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 recording template at Appendix 3 (See Section 6.8.10 (iii));
- 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 (this may be agreeing to disagree and to respect a different opinion);
 - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal;

STAGE 3 - FORMAL RECORDING

In cases where teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after it was determined that bullying behaviour occurred; or where the school has decided as part of its anti-bullying policy that in certain circumstances bullying (serious/dangerous incident/homophobic or transphobic terms) behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable. The relevant teacher must complete the recording template in full to record the bullying behaviour, retain it and provide a copy to the Principal. *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 at an earlier stage in relation to a case.*

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 the 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.

It is also important to note that bullying behaviour can be part of a continuum of behaviour rather than a stand-alone issue and in some cases behaviour may escalate beyond that which can be described as bullying to serious physical or sexual assault or harassment. To ensure that any such cases are dealt with appropriately, the school's anti-bullying policy has appropriate linkages with the overall code of behaviour and provide for referral to be made to relevant external agencies and authorities where appropriate. **In cases where a school has serious concerns in relation to managing the behaviour of a pupil, the advice of the National Education Psychological Service (NEPS) will be sought.**

In relation to bullying in schools, 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 provide that in situations where "the incident is serious and where the behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive, the school must consult the HSE Children and Family Social Services with a view to drawing up an appropriate response, such as a management plan".

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:
A programme of support for pupils who have been bullied includes their need for counselling and/or opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed.

A programme of support for those pupils involved in bullying behaviour is also part of the school's intervention process. Pupils involved in bullying behaviour will be given assistance on an ongoing basis. Class activities and learning strategies will be organised for those with low self-esteem allowing them opportunities to increase feelings of self-worth. Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.

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 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 using the template provided. 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: January 2019