

## Anti-Bullying Policy

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire agus Iosef Sinnsear 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 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;
  - 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
- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, religious beliefs, 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 Appendix 1

The relevant teacher for investigating and dealing with bullying is the class teacher in the first instance. If the matter is not satisfactorily dealt with, in the opinion of the relevant teacher, within 20 days and it is not likely to be resolved then the matter is brought to the attention of the teacher with responsibility for positive behaviour in the relevant standard. The incident will be recorded in the Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour (See Appendix 2). If after a further 14 days the matter is still not resolved it will be referred to the Principal. The Principal will speak to the children involved and may then contact the parents of all parties involved and address the issues with them and the relevant teacher.

4. **Where bullying is established** sanctions will be imposed in line with the school's Code of Behaviour. The particular sanction will be dependant on the severity of the incident and where it took place. The parents of the bully will have been invited to the school to discuss the situation prior to the imposition of any sanction.

In the interests of Child Safety a child may have to be isolated from his / her peers **prior to consultation with parents**. Such consultation will take place at the earliest opportunity.

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
  - The Stay Safe Programme
  - The School SPHE Programme
  - The RSE Programme
  - Material to be disseminated addressing Cyber- Bullying
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*) :
  - Children are encouraged to report bullying behaviour as soon as possible. It will be stressed to all children that, when they report incidents of bullying, they are not telling tales but rather they are behaving responsibly. The children will be encouraged to disclose all incidents or behaviour which they perceive as bullying whether directed at themselves or not.
  - All reports of bullying shall be recorded by the relevant teacher in a specific notebook for such reports.
  - Each child involved will be interviewed separately in order to establish facts.

- It may be necessary to further interview all involved in a group situation.
- The relevant teacher will deal with the report initially
- If after 20 days the matter is not satisfactorily concluded, and it is not likely to be so, then the report will be passed to the teacher charged with promoting positive behaviour in the particular standard. In addition the incident will be recorded on the Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour (Appendix 2).
- If, after a further 14 days the matter has still not been resolved then the matter will be reported to the Principal.
- The parents of all parties involved may be informed of the matter by the Principal unless they have been informed previously
- Parents have the opportunity to discuss the matter with the Principal and the relevant teacher
- Where it is determined that bullying has taken place the Parents /Guardians of the two parties will be met separately to explain the findings. The Principal will explain the actions being taken and the reasons for them. The following steps will be taken-
  - a) A restorative practice approach will be used initially as a means of resolving the situation. All staff will be made aware of the importance of this practice
  - b) A verbal warning will be given to the perpetrator, in the presence of his/her parents. The perpetrator will also be requested to apologise formally to the victim in the presence of the Principal and the relevant teacher and to give an assurance that the offending behaviour will stop.
  - c) If bullying should re-occur, a formal contract will be entered into by both parties. The parents of both parties will be informed of this contract. The Principal and the relevant teacher will monitor the contract regularly to ensure the situation is resolved.
  - d) If bullying re-occurs subsequent to the contract being put in place then a formal meeting will be convened between the perpetrator, the perpetrator's parents/guardians, the Principal and the Chairperson of the Board of Management and a formal suspension in line with the school's Code of Behaviour may be put in place., or the Chairperson may issue a final warning to the perpetrator.

If an incident still remains unresolved at this stage then it will be referred to the Board of Management.

- At all times, and notwithstanding the above, parents are invited to report any concerns they may have regarding bullying to the relevant teacher initially and, if the matter is not resolved satisfactorily, then to the Principal.
- **All school staff**, including ancillary staff and all parents are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying they witness to a teacher or to the Principal.

- 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 relationship of the parties involved as soon as possible.
  - All incidents will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all parties involved.
  - It should also be noted that the timeline for recording bullying behaviour does not in any way preclude the relevant teacher from consulting the Principal at an earlier stage in relation to a case.
  - In some cases behaviour may escalate beyond that which can be described as bullying to serious physical or sexual assault or harassment. Where the 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. Additionally, in the case of a serious incident, the school will 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 (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*) :
- Class lessons in SPHE which deal with respect for one another and which specifically address the type of bullying behaviour in a general way
  - All reports of bullying will be taken seriously and where necessary will be documented using the Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour.
  - The victim will be supported by the relevant school staff and will be given coping strategies to help avoid or overcome bullying.
  - If deemed necessary the assistance of the NEPS psychologist or of the HSE may be sought to provide support for the pupil (see above).

#### **8. Adult Bullying of Children**

All complaints against a teacher are handled under the agreed INTO/CPSMA Complaints Procedure. A copy of this procedure is available on the Department's website. If this cannot be accessed then please request a hard copy from the school.

#### **9. 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.

#### **10. 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

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.

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: [Signature]  
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: [Signature]  
(Principal)

Date: 18/11/2019

Date: 18-11-19

Date of next review: November 2020

## Appendix 1. Types of Bullying

## Appendix 2

### Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour Appendix 1:

#### Types of bullying

The following are some of the types of bullying behaviour that can occur amongst pupils:

o **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 or inflicting pain.

o **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.

o **Isolation/exclusion and other relational bullying:** This occurs where a certain person is deliberately



Appendix 2:

**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	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Pupil	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>

**4. Location of Incidents (tick relevant box(es))\***

Playground	<input type="checkbox"/>
Classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corridor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Toilets	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

**5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern**

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**6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) \***

Physical Aggression	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cyber-bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>
Damage to Property	<input type="checkbox"/>	Intimidation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Isolation/Exclusion	<input type="checkbox"/>	Malicious Gossip	<input type="checkbox"/>
Name Calling	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

**7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:**

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)

**8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact**

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**9. Details of actions taken**

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Signed \_\_\_\_\_ (Relevant Teacher) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date submitted to Principal \_\_\_\_\_