

Scoil Íosagáin

Anti-Bullying Policy

Rationale

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 Íosagáin 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.

Aims

- To create a school environment where children feel safe in every respect
- To create a school ethos which encourages staff, parents and children to define, disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour
- To raise awareness, with school management, teachers, pupils, parents/guardians of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour
- To ensure comprehensive supervision and monitoring measures through all areas of school activity are kept under observation
- To develop procedures for noting and reporting incidents of bullying behaviour
- To develop procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour
- To support those affected by bullying behaviour and those involved in bullying behaviour
- To work with and through the various local agencies, in countering all forms of bullying and anti-social behaviour
- To continually evaluate the effectiveness of school policy on anti-bullying

Principles and Best Practice

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.

Definition of Bullying

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*.

Teachers Responsible for Investigating Alleged Bullying Incidents

The relevant teacher for investigating and dealing with bullying is the class teacher of the pupil making the allegation.

A pupil or parent may bring a bullying concern to any teacher in the school.

Individual teachers must take appropriate measures regarding reports of bullying behaviour in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy.

In these procedures, the member of teaching staff who has responsibility for investigating and dealing with bullying is referred to as the "relevant teacher".

Anti-Bullying Education and Prevention Strategies

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 :

Effective practice includes 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.

As self-esteem is a major factor in determining behaviour, Scoil Íosagáin, through both our curricular and extra-curricular programmes, provides pupils with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth.

Initiatives and programmes focused on developing pupils' awareness and understanding of bullying, including its causes and effects, should deal explicitly, and in an age-appropriate manner, with the issue of identity-based bullying and in particular homophobic and transphobic bullying. For example, respect for LGBT members of the school community, teaching the Social, Personal, Health Education (SPHE) resource.

Prevention and awareness raising measures must also deal explicitly with cyber-bullying. As part of our Stay Safe Awareness Week, lessons from the Webwise Programme are taught. The best way to address cyber-bullying is to prevent it happening in the first place. Prevention and any awareness raising measures should focus on educating pupils on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while on-line and also on developing a culture of reporting any concerns about cyber-bullying. The school-wide approach and the role of parents as outlined in Section 6.3 is of importance in this regard. The prevention and awareness raising measures also takes into account the scope for cyber-bullying to occur as a result of access to technology from within the school. (See also our Acceptable Use of the Internet Policy)

Our school's approach to tackling and preventing bullying takes particular account of the needs of pupils with disabilities or with SEN, and joins up with other relevant school policies and supports and should ensure that all the services that provide for such pupils work together. Approaches to decreasing the likelihood of bullying for pupils with SEN include 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.

Our school's prevention and awareness raising measures are appropriate to the type of bullying and take into account the age and gender of the pupils involved. The school will work to raise the awareness of bullying so that all members of the school community understand what bullying is and how the school deals with bullying behaviour.

Our teachers can 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. The 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. The Webwise programme explores how to remain safe while using the internet. The Religion programme fosters the Christian values of showing respect and tolerance for all.

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. In English, there is a wide range of literature available which could be used to stimulate discussion. In Civil, Social and Political Education (CSPE), the interdependence of people in communities at local, national and international levels is stressed. In Geography and History references to colonisation, exploitation and dictatorships could be used to illustrate the negative aspect of power. The work could be extended into many other areas such as Art, Drama and Physical Education. Co-operation and group enterprise can be promoted through team sports and school clubs as well as through practical subjects. Sporting activities in particular can provide excellent opportunities for channelling and learning how to control aggression.

Procedures for Dealing with Incidents of Bullying

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:

- Each month each child will participate in an anti-bullying survey. See Appendix 5. The completed surveys are kept on file by the class 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.
- If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, he/she must keep appropriate written records (See Appendix 2) which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- The relevant teacher assures the boy being bullied that he/she will speak with the boy(s) involved in the bullying behaviour, and tell them that the behaviour must stop. If the bullying behaviour continues, parents of both boys, and the principal will be informed.
- The principal will meet with the parents of the boy who has been bullying and guarantees are sought from both the parents and the boy that the bullying will cease. The boy being bullied is told that if further bullying occurs, he is to report it immediately and not wait until the next month's survey is carried out.
- If a boy continues to engage in bullying behaviours, he and his parent(s)/guardian(s) will be asked to meet with the chairperson of the Board of Management, where the reports of the bullying incidents are discussed. A contract will be drawn up and signed by the boy, his parent/guardian and the chairperson of the BoM.
- If a boy fails to follow the terms of the contract, the Board of Management will move to expel the boy from the school.

The recording template must be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable. 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 or Deputy Principal at an earlier stage in relation to a case.

Support for Pupils who have been Bullied or have engaged in Bullying Behaviour

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

- Participation in SPHE lessons where emphasis is placed on building up self-esteem.
- A Care Team meeting may be held, where adults involved in working with the pupil meet to discuss the concerns and draw up an action plan.
- Pupils may be included in the school's Educational Support Project, where activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed.
- Pupils may be included in the school's other intervention programmes, e.g. the Special Art Group
- If deemed necessary counselling from outside agencies would be recommended.

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 may need assistance on an ongoing basis.

- For those with low self-esteem, opportunities are developed to increase feelings of self-worth. This may be done through SPHE lessons and/or inclusion in the Educational Support Project. It is, therefore, important that the learning strategies applied within the school allow for the enhancement of the pupil's 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.

Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour should be encouraged to record this in the Anti-Bullying Survey and to discuss them with teachers.

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.

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, and is readily accessible to parents and pupils on request. 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, and be readily accessible to parents and pupils on request. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: _____
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _____
(Principal)

Date: _____

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____

Appendices

1. Signs and Symptoms of Bullying.
2. Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour.
3. Checklist for the annual review of the Anti-Bullying Policy and its implementation.
4. Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the Anti-Bullying Policy.
5. Monthly Anti-Bullying Survey.

Appendix 1

Signs and Symptoms of Bullying

The following are signs/symptoms which may suggest that a pupil is being bullied:

- Anxiety about travelling to/from school
- Unwillingness to go to school
- Deterioration in educational performance
- Pattern of Physical illness
- Unexplained changes in either mood/behaviour
- Visible signs of anxiety/distress
- Possessions missing
- Increased requests for money
- Unexplained bruising
- Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling him
- Exclusion
- Indirect hints/indications e.g. preference for wet days, reference to the absence of certain pupils

Appendix 2 School Bullying Behaviour Report Form

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"/>
Other	<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"/>
School Bus	<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)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

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/Deputy Principal _____

*** Note:** The categories listed in the tables 3, 4 & 6 are suggested and schools may add to or amend these to suit their own circumstances.

Appendix 3

Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation. The following checklist must be used for this purpose. The checklist is an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. In order to complete the checklist, an examination and review involving both quantitative and qualitative analysis, as appropriate across the various elements of the implementation of the school's anti-bullying policy will be required.

	Yes /No
Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools</i> ?	
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	
Is the Board satisfied that school staff are sufficiently familiar with the policy and procedures to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy and procedures in their day to day work?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	
Has the Board discussed how well the school is handling all reports of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and not therefore included in the Principal's periodic report to the Board?	
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	
Has the data available from cases reported to the Principal (by the bullying recording template) been analysed to identify any issues, trends or patterns in bullying behaviour?	
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	

Signed _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date _____

Signed: _____
Principal

Date _____

Appendix 4

Notification regarding the Board of Management's annual review of the Anti-Bullying Policy.

To: _____

The Board of Management of Scoil Íosagáin wishes to inform you that :

- The Board of Management's annual review of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and its implementation was completed at the Board of Management meeting of _____ (Date)
- This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in Appendix 4 of the Department of Education and Skills's Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

Signed : _____

Date : _____

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed : _____

Date : _____

Principal

Appendix 5

(Anti-Bullying Survey – Completed by each child every month)

Name: _____ Class: _____ Date: _____

Is someone bullying you in Scoil Íosagáin? Yes _____ No _____

Where are you being bullied? In Class _____

In the yard _____

On the way to/from school _____

The person who is bullying me is _____

Do you know any other boy who is being bullied? Who? _____