



# Scoil Bhríde, Loreto National School

Scartlea, Muckross, Killarney, Co Kerry.

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## 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 Bhríde National School 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 behaviour and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils. The school community believes strongly that respect for all at all times must be promoted and become intrinsic in the ethos of society. This is fundamentally, the biblical principle of the 'Golden Rule.' Matthew 7:12 "So always treat others as you would like them to treat you."

The children are taught that society is made up of a variety of different people, all of whom deserve our respect, all of whom have the right to be treated equally and to have the fundamental right to be allowed to exist in society and be content in their lives. No bullying can therefore be tolerated and no discrimination based on the nine stated grounds included in equality legislation, i.e. gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community, can be allowed.

The Board of Management and the staff of Scoil Bhríde are 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;
- is consistent with the catholic ethos of the school.
- 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;**

The role of the teacher is to educate. The following ethical values underpin the standards of teaching, knowledge, skill, competence and conduct as set out in the Code of Professional Conduct for Teachers.

[www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/...to-Teach/Code-of-Professional-Conduct-for-Teachers.pdf](http://www.teachingcouncil.ie/en/...to-Teach/Code-of-Professional-Conduct-for-Teachers.pdf)

**c. A school-wide approach;**

**d. A shared understanding of what bullying behaviour 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.**

### **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 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 behaviour is set out in Appendix 1 of this policy.

### **4. Who will deal with accusations of bullying ?**

The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:

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.

The relevant teacher responsible for investigating and dealing with/resolving bullying incidents will be the class teacher or class teachers of the pupils involved.

The relevant teacher or teachers should keep the principal teacher/ deputy principal informed of incidents and of progress being made to resolve these.

Where the relevant teacher is concerned that the gravity of the situation warrants immediate action from the principal, he/she should initially consult with the principal/deputy principal.

If it is agreed that the seriousness of the bullying behaviour warrants it, the principal/deputy principal will assume the role of relevant teacher to investigate the bullying behaviour.

Staff at all times will endeavour to encourage pupils to show respect for each other.

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:

- The Stay Safe Programme. Parents are encouraged to visit the Stay Safe website ([www.staysafe.ie](http://www.staysafe.ie)) and a link is provided from the school website.
- The SPHE curriculum provides opportunities for role playing bullying incidents and conflict resolution.
- RSE Programme
- Walk Tall Programme
- School Poster and Card campaign based around 'Friendship Week' in February each year
- Anti-Bullying website (as set up by the DES in conjunction with this initiative)
- Staff at all times will endeavour to encourage pupils to show respect for each other.
- "A Friendship Stop" is in use in the Junior Yard.
- Posters and books addressing cyber-bullying are on display in the school.
- [www.antibullyingcampaign.ie](http://www.antibullyingcampaign.ie) (Seán Fallon) No blame approach/Foster a culture of telling.

## **6. Procedures for investigating and Dealing with Bullying**

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.

- All reports of bullying behaviour, will be noted, investigated and dealt with by teachers. In that way pupils will gain confidence again in "telling".
- It will be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying behaviour they are not telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
- The class teacher will record any incident of intentional negative behaviour and these will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Code of Discipline.
- Records are passed on from class teacher to class teacher as the child progresses through the school. Serious cases of bullying behaviour by pupils will be referred immediately to the principal or vice-principal.
- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying 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.
- Non-teaching staff such as Special needs assistants, secretaries, caretakers, cleaners should be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the appropriate teaching member of staff.

## **7. Procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying.**

- Teachers will take a calm, unemotional problem solving approach when dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents/guardians. In general such incidents are best investigated discreetly in accordance with Child Protection Policy. In any incident of bullying behaviour, the teacher should speak separately to the pupils involved, in an attempt to get both sides of the story.
- All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of the pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way.
- When analyzing incidents of bullying behaviour 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 and then the group should meet together. Each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone is clear about what everyone else has said.
- If it is concluded that a pupil has engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to her/him how she/he is in breach of the Code of Behaviour and discipline and try to get her/him to see the situation from the victim's point of view.
- The primary aim for the relevant teacher 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 (rather than to apportion blame)
- Teachers who are investigating cases of bullying behaviour should keep a written record of their discussion with those involved. It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident.

## **8. 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;
  - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardian(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.

## **9. Recording of bullying behaviour**

### **Informal Stage**

All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them using the incident report form (Appendix 2)

- All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher
- While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying behaviour 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.
- The teacher will speak to all the children involved and the incident will be investigated
- The teacher may also contact the parents of all parties involved and address the issue with them. The situation will be monitored and the Principal (and other teachers as necessary) will be kept informed.
- Sanctions will be imposed in line with the school's Code of Discipline but there may be some variation on the sanctions imposed.

### **Sanctions in accordance with our Code of Discipline**

- Reasoning with pupil
- Reprimand (including advice on how to improve)
- Temporary separation from peers, friends and others, removal of privileges.
- Detention during break
- Prescribing additional work-educational
- Communications with parents
- Referral to Principal
- Suspension
- Expulsion

### **Formal Stage**

#### **Formal Stage 1-determination that bullying behaviour has occurred**

If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour 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.

#### **Formal Stage 2-Appendix 3 (From DES Procedures)**

The relevant teacher must use the recording template at **Appendix 3** to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

a) 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

b) In certain circumstances serious incidents of bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable and recorded on the recording template. (Appendix 3)

When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question in the child's file and a copy maintained by the principal.

These records (Appendix 3) will be kept in the child's file, and stored in the class teacher's locked filing cabinet. The class teacher and Principal/Deputy Principal will have access to these records. They will be retained indefinitely.

The school will also work with the alleged bullies and their victims in revising the programmes above, and with one-to-one support in resolving the issues raised.

### **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) to support school interventions
- No Blame Approach
- Circle Time
- Restorative interviews
- Restorative conferencing
- Implementing sociogram questionnaires

The Procedures mention the following intervention strategies and reference Ken Rigby;

[www.kenrigby.net](http://www.kenrigby.net)

- The traditional disciplinary approach
- Strengthening the victim
- Mediation
- Restorative Practice
- The Support Group Method
- The Method of Shared Concern

### **10. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying behaviour**

involves discussing the incidents with the pupils, reassuring them that they were right to bring the events to the attention of staff, that they were not telling tales and their actions will help others, they will be reminded that they should tell again if they have any new concerns.

- The teacher(s) involved and the principal will check from time to time with the child that everything is ok.
- All staff dealing with a bullying incident will, as well as reasoning with the pupil perpetrating the negative behaviour, will also offer support and comfort to the victim.
- In more serious incidents the victim will also receive guidance and the guardian/s will be informed.

- All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying behaviour to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience e.g.
  - Pastoral care system
  - Buddy / Peer mentoring system
  - Group work such as circle time
- If pupils require counselling or 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 the pupil involved in the bullying behaviour.

Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

### **11. 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.

(Note that the Schools Broadband Programme has blocked all social networking sites on the basis that they waste time and take up too much of the bandwidth which is been provided for educational purposes only).

### **12. 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.

**13. This policy has been made available to school personnel** and published on the school's website and is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and the Patron if requested.

**14. 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's website and be otherwise easily accessible to parents and



pupils on request 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.

**This policy was reviewed by staff and ratified by the Board of Management on the 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2015 and will be reviewed annually. (Reviewed June 2021)**

Signed: -----

Fr Kieran O'Brien

Chairperson Board of Management

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Mr. Brian O'Sullivan

Principal

## 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 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 behaviour occurs when a person's attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly 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 (girl or boy); non-verbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumours about a person or giving them the "silent treatment".

o **Cyber-bullying:** This type of bullying behaviour 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, e-mail, 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-bullying 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.

o **Name calling:** Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) which 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 or 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.

o **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 a pupil's 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.

o **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.