

## Scoil Oilibhéir 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 Oilibhéir 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 such as racism, members of the travelling community, pupils with special educational needs, 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

### 2.2 Types of bullying

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

- **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.
- **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 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".
- **Cyber-bullying:** This type of bullying 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.
- **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.
- **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.

- **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.
- 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*.

4. The class teacher will investigate and deal with the bullying in the first instance.
5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying such as racism, members of the travelling community, pupils with special educational needs, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:
  - The following programmes are taught in Scoil Oilibhéir which are intended to develop self-esteem in our pupils and to heighten the awareness among pupils of respecting themselves and others - Stay Safe, R.S.E and Alive O. Pupils will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.
  - Anti-Bullying policy to be highlighted to pupils at class and school assemblies. An Anti-Bullying lesson is taught at the beginning of each term and the Principal speaks to all classes at the Termly assembly about Bullying. The importance of good manners and mutual respect is encouraged at these assemblies.
  - 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.
  - 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.

- 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.
  - School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community. Guest speakers are occasionally invited to speak to staff, parents and pupils to heighten awareness of all types of Bullying. Staff CPD (Continuous Professional Development) will assist in learning about current technologies.
6. This school is committed to teaching children the knowledge and skills to be able to use ICT effectively, safely and responsibly. Pupils will learn about cyber bullying through Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE), assemblies, and other curriculum projects. Self-help skills to stay safe on the net and to cope with possible cyber aggression will be taught. These lessons will aim to give pupils confidence and self-efficacy to seek help for themselves and others and will encourage them not to be bystanders to any cyber bullying. The school will engage a speaker to facilitate a workshop on cyber bullying for senior classes from time to time. 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.
  - Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
  - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
  - The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.
- Pupils from 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Class will sign an Acceptable Use of ICT (Information and Communication Technology) contract. Parents of Junior Infants – 2<sup>nd</sup> Class will be expected to sign an Acceptable Use of ICT contract and to discuss its meaning with their children.
  - Raise awareness of parents by highlighting School Motto and sending home relevant information (eg useful websites) via school newsletter. Clear protocols are in place to encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect that their child is having any difficulty in school.
  - Parents, as the primary and natural educators of their children, are responsible for supervising and teaching their children in relation to cyber-bullying and its consequences. Parents will be provided with information and advice on how to combat cyber bullying through the use of School newsletter Scéala Oilibhéir and school website to inform parents about internet safety tips, useful websites etc.
  - An example of this is that no person under 13 years is permitted to register with Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat. Parents will be made aware that it is not good practice to allow children to register with anonymous online forums, which take no responsibility for the uploading or filtering of content.

- Scoil Oilibhéir internet access is filtered by the NCTE which endeavours to block access to inappropriate websites, apps etc.
- Promote positive relationships and behaviour in the school environment; by encouraging children to use good manners and to treat others with respect and kindness. Scoil Oilibheir is a Health Promoting School and is committed to promoting an environment which promotes the physical and mental health of our pupils. Pupil members of the the Health Promoting Schools Committee are actively involved in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Yard Buddy system, Lunchtime Pals and other student support activities that can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.

### **Bullying by Adults**

- In the case of **intra-staff bullying**, Scoil Oilibhéir will adopt the procedures outlined in Section C (c2) of the INTO booklet: '*Working Together: Procedures and Policies for Positive Staff Relations*'. A copy of this document is available for free download on the INTO website.
  - In the case of **Teacher–Child bullying**, a complaint should in the first instance be raised with the teacher in question by the parent/guardian of the child if possible and then if necessary referred to the Principal. Where it has not been possible to agree a framework for resolution, the matter should be referred in writing by both parties to the Board of Management for investigation.
  - In the case of **Parent–Teacher** bullying, the Principal should be informed in the first instance, and if deemed necessary the Board of Management should subsequently be informed in writing.
  - In the case of **Teacher-Parent** bullying, the Principal should be informed in the first instance, and if deemed necessary the Board of Management should subsequently be informed in writing.
  - In the case of **Parent/Visitor to the school–Child** bullying, the complaint should be referred in the first instance to the child's class teacher and subsequently to the Principal if unresolved.
  - In the case of **Principal–Parent/ Child** bullying, the matter should be raised with the Principal if possible, or referred to the Chairperson of the Board of Management.
7. 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

#### ***Investigating and dealing with incidents:***

- All reports of bullying will be noted and investigated by the relevant teacher. 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;
- 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;
- Pupils will understand that reporting is not “telling tales”. Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behavior must be reported to a teacher. The class teacher should investigate the incident reported to him/her and attempt to resolve the issue between bully and victim.
- If a group of children is involved, interview each member individually, then as a group. Ask each member for his account. In this way, children are not intimidated in the group setting and are more likely to tell the truth when not under pressure in the group dynamic.
- 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;
- All allegations of bullying should be investigated and information obtained recorded in “The Information Gathering Form” and returned to the Deputy Principal.
- 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;
- In more serious cases or if a previous incident has occurred, the matter should be referred for investigation immediately to the Deputy Principal/Principal.
- The Deputy Principal/Principal and teacher should try to resolve incidents at this level (cf following the above procedures)
- The Deputy Principal keeps a written account of the proceedings and records them in the child’s personal file and the school information system. In an established case of bullying, the principal or teacher should communicate with the parents of both parties. Explain the actions taken and the reasons for them, referring them to school policy.
- 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 rather than to apportion blame. However It is the duty of the school to provide a safe environment for all children. Should the above interventions fail and the bullying continue, a programme of appropriate sanctions in line with our Code of Behaviour will be implemented by the Principal in consultation with the parents and the Board of Management. These sanctions may include a period of suspension during which there will be ongoing consultation with the parents to decide on appropriate action(s) to be taken in the best interests of the child. Suspension for any period of time

will be reported in writing by the Principal to the Chair of the Board of Management

- 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;

### **Recording**

The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

#### ***Informal- pre-determination that bullying has occurred***

- All reports, including anonymous 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 (Information Gathering Form)
- All reports of cyber bullying will be investigated, recorded, stored in the Principal's office and monitored regularly. The police will be contacted in cases of actual or suspected illegal content.
- The relevant teacher must inform the deputy principal of all incidents being investigated.

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

- If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher completes Appendix 3 form which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved. This record will be stored in a file of that name in the Deputy Principal's office and on the school's electronic information system in the children's personal file (Aladdin)
- The recording template must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal.

### **Follow up**

- 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;
- Relationship between bully and victim should be regularly monitored until such time as the teacher is satisfied that the situation is resolved.
- -Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardian(s) or the school Principal or Deputy Principal

- 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.
  - Have follow-up meetings and informal conversations with both parties to encourage them and to ensure that improvements are maintained.
8. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:
- All in-school supports 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.
    - Pastoral care system
    - Yard Buddy system
    - Group work such as circle time , Social skills groups, Band teachers etc....
  - 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.
  - Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

#### 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.

11. This policy was ratified by the Board of Management at the Board meeting of 26/05/2014.

12. 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.



13. 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: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: 27/05/2014

Date of next review: School Year 2014-15, Term 3.

**Appendix 1: Information Gathering Form on Reported Bullying**

<b>Rolla number of pupils:</b>
<b>Class:</b>
<b>Nature of incident</b>
<b>Date and time of incident:</b>
<b>Place of incident:</b>
<b>Action taken:</b>
<b>Other relevant details</b>
<b>Has bullying occurred in this instance?</b>
<b>Signature of teacher(s):</b>