

Scoil Mhuire, Our Lady's Island,

Broadway, Co. Wexford.

Roll No. 19741A



Anti Bullying Policy

Our School Position on Bullying

Our school community believes that each pupil has a right to an education free from fear and intimidation.

The school regards bullying as a serious infringement of individual rights and a serious threat to self-esteem and self-confidence of targeted pupil(s). Therefore the school community does not tolerate bullying of any kind.

Every report of bullying is treated seriously and dealt with, having due regard for the well being of the targeted pupil(s) and the perpetrator(s).

The immediate priority, should a bullying incident occur, is ending the bullying. This protects the person(s) being targeted, resolves the issues and restores the relationships involved insofar as practicable using a 'Reform, not Blame' approach.

In line with this the school has adopted the 'Positive Behaviour Promotion' programme. This programme lays out procedures which is a Whole School Approach and focuses on the desire to address the area of unhelpful and bullying type behaviours in a way that allows for real involvement by all children and their parents. As part of this, the school carries out (from 2nd class to 6th class) a bi-termly Anti- Bullying Campaign with a 'Regular Class Survey'. This programme is deemed a precursor to the formal initiating of an allegation of bullying.

All pupils are expected to contribute to the creation and maintenance of a safe environment in the school. On becoming aware of any bullying situation, involving members of the school community, they should notify a trusted responsible adult. Bullying behaviour is too serious not to report.

Pupils' participation in school life is generally encouraged through existing school structures. Awareness of bullying, and willingness to take action to prevent or stop it, is part of this participation.

1. Introduction

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 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. Maintaining a Positive School Environment

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;
 - 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. Defining 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
- 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.

School hours are from 9.20am until 3pm, during which the school has responsibility for pupils.

This anti-bullying policy applies to all pupils enrolled in our school during the school day or involved in school activities or representing the school either during or after school.

Appendix 1 gives a list of specific examples of bullying behaviour. This list is not exhaustive.

Appendix 2 gives advice for parents and pupils.

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. Teachers

The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:
(See section 6.8. of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools*)

- Classroom related incidents:
 - ✓ The class teacher
- Yard incidents:
 - ✓ The supervising teacher or it may be passed onto the class teacher, deputy principal or principal.
- Incidents at school events:

- ✓ The supervising teacher or it may be passed onto the deputy principal or principal.
- Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

5. Prevention

The education and prevention strategies that will be used by the school are as follows:
(See Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*)

- A school – wide approach to fostering respect for all members of the school community. The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping and highlighting the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- Modelling of respectful behaviour and language by teachers and staff.
- At least three specific awareness raising exercises per school year for each class group (1st to 6th classes) proactively explaining the nature and variety, causes, consequences and unacceptability of bullying.

Through ongoing awareness raising exercises on bullying the school hopes to build a culture where bullying is **Recognised, Rejected and Reported** by all in the school community.

- Pupils are explicitly taught how to recognise, reject and report bullying behaviour. Bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place. 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.
 - ✓ Make a phone call to the school or to a trusted teacher in school.
 - ✓ Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
- Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school which will be displayed in prominent places around the school environment and included in students journals.
- Education of pupils, where age appropriate, on appropriate online behaviour.
- An annual presentation for parents and 5th/6th class pupils on cyber-bullying.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parent(s)/guardian(s) are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school on enrolment of their child. Both are available on the school website.
- Bullying to be discussed formally at regular intervals.
- The implementation of the SPHE, the RSE, Walk Tall and Stay Safe Programmes.
- 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.
- Through presentations or other exercises, the school staff and parents/guardians are made aware of the nature of bullying and the signs that might indicate that a pupil is being bullied.

Links to other policies

The following policies are particularly relevant:

- Code of Behaviour
- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Attendance

6. Procedures

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)

- **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.**
Bullying is **Recognised, Rejected and Reported** by all members of the school community and that where bullying has taken place the emphasis is on **Reform not Blame**. This approach, consistently implemented, is recognised as leading to the best outcomes in incidents of bullying behaviour.
- The school has a clear and consistent approach to dealing with reports of bullying.
- Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved understand this approach from the start.

Reporting bullying behaviour

- Any parent/guardian may bring a bullying concern or incident to the attention of any teacher in the school.
- All reports, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs) caretaker, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them or mentioned to them to the relevant teacher.

Procedure for investigating and dealing with a report of bullying

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the (relevant) teacher will exercise his/her professional judgment to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved. See phased approach further down.
- 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;
- Teachers will take a calm, unemotional problem solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.

- 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 analyzing 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.
- The School, through the 'Relevant Teacher', reserves the right to ask any pupil to write an account of what happened, as part of an investigation. This will be a standard procedure and does not necessarily imply that a pupil is guilty of misbehaviour.
- If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first.
 - Thereafter, all of 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.
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after the interview by the teacher.

School Procedure for dealing with established cases of bullying

Where it has been established, through investigation, that bullying is taking place, the following approach will be used to deal with the incident.

Phase 1- This phase is done in conjunction with the 'Positive Behaviour Promotion' (Appendix 4)

- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him/her is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and effort will be made to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied. The teacher will seek a promise from the child that there will be no further bullying of them. In return for honesty, keeping their promise and an apology to the child who has been bullied, the child/children will receive no blame or sanction. The Principal will be informed of the case and the matter may be referred to him/her. Parents may be contacted at this stage.

Phase 2.

- If the promise is broken the teacher will inform the Principal and parents of the child/children engaged in bullying behaviour. In return for honesty and keeping their second promise the child will receive no blame or sanction.

Phase 3.

- If the second promise is broken the behaviour will be dealt with in line with the school's Code of Behaviour which will involve an escalating series of sanctions which may ultimately lead to suspension or expulsion.

In cases at Phase 2, where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour 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 sequence of events and the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy).

The school should give parent(s)/guardian(s) an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the pupils;

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;

It must 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.

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 judgment, 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 relationship between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable; and
- ✓ Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents 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 is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, parents can make a complaint through the school's complaints procedure.

In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedure and is still not satisfied, parents/guardians have a right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

7. Recording

It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner.

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

Informal – pre-determination as to whether bullying has occurred

- All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them.
- All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher
- While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher must keep a written report, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.
- The relevant teacher must inform the principal of all incidents being investigated.

Formal Stage 1 – following determination that bullying has occurred

- If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must keep appropriate written reports which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved. When an investigation is completed and/or a bullying situation is resolved the 'Relevant Teacher' will complete a report, to include the findings of the investigation, the strategy adopted and outcome of the intervention, as well as any other relevant information. A copy of this should be given to the Principal.
- The school in consultation with the relevant teacher/s will develop a protocol for the storage of all records retained by the relevant teacher.

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) the school has decided, that as part of its anti-bullying policy, in certain circumstances bullying behaviour **must** be recorded and report immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable. The list of behaviours that must be reported immediately to the principal are listed in the Code of Behaviour.

All documentation regarding bullying incidents and their resolution is retained securely in the school as per current data retention guidelines.

Bullying as part of a continuum of behaviour

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. In such cases the behaviour will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour Policy and referral will be made to the relevant external agencies and authorities as appropriate.

In cases 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.

8. Programme of Support

The school's programme of support with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:
(See Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*)

- Ending the bullying behaviour
- In-school supports and opportunities will be provided for pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience – for example
 - ✓ Implementing a “buddy system” for yards
 - ✓ Group work such a circle time.
 - ✓ The school will seek to identify areas of responsibility for children affected by bullying which will help to improve their self-esteem.
 - ✓ The school runs a wide range of activities for children throughout the year. The school will encourage pupils affected by bullying to become involved in these activities if they are not already involved.
- Class teachers will check with pupils affected by bullying on a regular basis.
- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are doing the right and honourable thing and giving them praise for this.
- Pupils affected by bullying both those who have been bullied and those who have bullied may need counseling. The school will seek assistance from NEPS as required in each case and will act on advice received.

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.

Ratification

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school's website and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested. All parents/guardians of children being inducted into the school are made aware of the anti-bullying policy. Parents are asked to sign that they are aware of all school and support the staff in their efforts to provide a positive learning experience for children in the school.

This Policy was reviewed in September 2022. It was ratified by the Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire on 20th September 2022.

Chairperson: *Jim Cogley PP*

Fr. Jim Cogley

Principal: *Eimear Druhan*

Ms. Eimear Druhan

Appendix 1: Examples of Bullying Behaviours

The list of examples below is non exhaustive.

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racists bullying etc. • Physical aggression • Damage to property • Name calling • Slagging • The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person. • Offensive graffiti • Extortion • Intimidation • Insulting or offensive gestures • Invasion of personal space • A combination of any of the types listed. |
| <p>Cyber</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denigration: Spreading rumors, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation • Harassment: Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual • Impersonation: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name. • Flaming: Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight • Trickery: Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online • Outing: Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images • Exclusion: Purposefully excluding someone from an online group • Cyber stalking: Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety • Silent telephone/mobile phone call • Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls • Abusive text messages • Abusive email • Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles • Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures • Abusive posts on any form of communication technology |

Identity Based Behaviours:**Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation**

(gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the traveller community)

| | |
|---|--|
| Homophobic and Transgender | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spreading rumors about a person's sexual orientation• Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation• Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian... used in a derogatory manner• Physical intimidation or attacks• Threats |
| Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveler background |
| Relational | <p>This involves manipulating relationships as means of bullying Behaviours include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Malicious gossip• Isolation & exclusion• Ignoring• Excluding from the group• Taking someone's friends away• "Bitching"• Spreading rumours• Breaking confidence• Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear• Use of terminology such as 'nerd' in a derogatory way |
| Sexual | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching• Harassment |
| Special Educational Needs, Disability | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Name Calling• Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs• Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerability and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying• Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and cues.• Mimicking a persons' disability• Setting others up for ridicule |

Appendix 2: Combating Bullying and the Action towards Preventions

Role of Staff

- The Principal and staff exercise constant vigilance in the matter of misbehaviour. Our aim is to prevent misbehaviour rather than control. Positive behaviour is always recognised, affirmed and sought.
- Any complaints of bullying are dealt with quickly, firmly and fairly following the procedures in the Anti-Bullying Policy.
- Awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour is addressed in the classroom, at school assemblies and other informal occasions when the opportunity arises.
- Pupils are taught skills and encouraged to report any incident of bullying.

Advice for Pupils

- Tell yourself that you do not deserve to be bullied, and that it is **WRONG**
- Be proud of who you are. It is good to be individual.
- Try not to show that you are upset. It is hard but a bully thrives on someone's fear.
- Stay with a group of friends/people. There is safety in numbers.
- Be assertive – shout **NO**. Walk away confidently. Go straight to a teacher or member of staff.
- Fighting back makes things worse – So don't fight back. **REPORT** to a teacher or parent(s)/guardians instead. If you need support find a friend and both of you speak to the teacher.
- Generally it is best to tell an adult you trust straight away. You will get immediate support.

The teachers will take you seriously and will deal with bullies in a way which will end the bullying and not make things worse for you.

IF YOU KNOW SOMEONE IS BEING BULLIED

TAKE ACTION – Watching and doing nothing looks as if you are on the side of the bully. It makes the victim feel more unhappy and on their own.

If you feel you cannot get involved, tell an adult **IMMEDIATELY**. Teachers have ways of dealing with the bully without getting you into trouble.

Do not be, or pretend to be, friends with a bully.

Advice for Parents:

- Look for unusual behaviour in your children. For example, they may suddenly not wish to attend school, feel ill regularly, or not complete work to their normal standard, as for money or begin stealing money.
- Always take an active role in your child's education by enquiring how they are getting on.
- If you feel your child may be a victim of bullying behaviour, inform the school IMMEDIATELY. Your complaint will be taken seriously and appropriate action will follow.
- It is important to advise your child not to fight back. It can make matters worse.
- Tell your child there is nothing wrong with him/her. It is not his/her fault that they are being bullied.
- Make sure your child is fully aware of the School Policy concerning Bullying, and that they will not be afraid to ask for help.

Appendix 3: Template for recording bullying behaviour

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

| |
|--|
| |
|--|

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

| | | | |
|---------------------|--|------------------|--|
| Physical Aggression | | Cyber-bullying | |
| Damage to Property | | Intimidation | |
| Isolation/Exclusion | | Malicious Gossip | |
| Name Calling | | Other (specify) | |

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

9. Details of actions taken

Signed : _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date: _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal: _____

Appendix 4: Positive Behaviour Promotion

See PDF attached to this file.