

Anti-bullying policy - Gaelscoil an Teaghlaigh Naofa 2021

- 1.** In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, (Tusla), the Board of Management of Gaelscoil an Teaghlaigh Naofa has updated and 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.

The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils. The school community believes strongly that respect for everybody, at all times, must be promoted and become intrinsic in the ethos of society.

Treat others as you would like them to treat you.

Caithigí le daoine eile mar ba mhaith libh go gcaithfidís libh.

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 have the right to be allowed to exist in our 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, ie. Gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of minorities including the Traveller community can be allowed.

- 2.** The Board of Management and the staff of Gaelscoil an Teaghlaigh Naofa are therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:
 - **A positive school culture and climate which:**
 1. Is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity
 2. Encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment
 3. Promotes respectful relationships across the school community
 - **Effective leadership**
 - **A whole- school approach**
 - **A shared understanding of what bullying is and of its impact**
 - **Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness-raising measures) that:**
 1. Build empathy
 2. Explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including homophobic and trans phobic bullying.
 - **Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils**
 - **Supports for staff**
 - **Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour**
 - **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 by a group against another person or persons and which is repeated over time.

The following types of bullying behaviours are included in the definition of bullying:

- Deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying

- Cyber-bullying. This type of bullying is increasingly common and is constantly evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies, such as text, social network sites, e-mail, instant messaging, apps, gaming sites, chat rooms and other on-line technologies. Being the target of inappropriate or hurtful messages is the most common form of on-line bullying.
- Identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs or bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller Community.

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, playing 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. Who will deal with accusations of bullying:

As with all instances of misbehaviours in school, if there is an accusation of bullying in school, the class teacher, or the teacher on yard duty, should the incident take place in the school yard, will investigate and deal with the incident in the first instance. The teacher on yard will report the incident to the child(ren)'s class teacher.

If there is an acceptance that the behaviour constituted bullying, or the behaviour is repeated, the matter is brought to the attention of the principal. The principal will speak to all of the children involved and the incident will be recorded on the "Template for recording bullying behaviour" (Appendix 2).

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
- SPHE
- RSE Programme
- Walk Tall Programme
- Religious Education Programme
- SCP –Transitional Programme
- Anti-Bullying websites
- Posters and books addressing bullying
- Promotion of relevant home/school/community links.
- Anti-bullying/ Internet Safety talks for pupils and parents.
- Constant revision of classroom/schoolyard rules.
- Promotion of a whole school responsibility in creating and maintaining a positive attitude.

- On going staff development.
- The promotion of sporting activities to provide opportunities for co-operation and group enterprise

6. The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:

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).

Bearing this in mind, the school procedures are as follows:

1. In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred, and how best the situation might be resolved.
2. All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher(s). 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.
3. Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, SNA's, caretakers, cleaners, bus drivers etc must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.
4. Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible.
5. It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents), understand the above approach from the outset.
6. The teacher will maintain a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.
7. Initial investigations of bullying will be done in the classroom, but, at the teacher's discretion, could also be conducted outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
8. All interviews will 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.
9. When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This will be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
10. If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved will be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member will be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements.
11. Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher.
12. It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s).
13. Where the teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts will be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
14. In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform

them of the matter and explain the actions being taken. The school will afford the parents an opportunity to discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils. At all stages of the process, it is important that all parties exercise discretion and refrain from any action that would prolong or exacerbate the situation.

15. It will be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school.
16. Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved may 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.
17. A follow-up meeting with parents of the children involved may be arranged after an appropriate time to ensure that the matter has been resolved satisfactorily.
18. In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded by the relevant teacher in the recording template at Appendix 2.
19. 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
 - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal
20. Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures
21. In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their rights to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Procedures for recording bullying behaviour

The Board of Management will ensure that the school has clear procedures for the formal noting and reporting of bullying behaviour and are documented in the school's anti-bullying policy.

All records must be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour will adhere to the following:

1. While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant 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
2. If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying 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.
3. The relevant teacher must use the bullying template at Appendix 2 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 it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred and

- b) Where it is deemed appropriate to record and report the bullying behaviour immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal

In each of the circumstances at a) and b) above, the recording template at Appendix 3 must be completed in full and retained by the relevant teacher and a copy provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

7. Supports for pupils affected by bullying:

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying involves discussing the incidents with the pupils, reassuring them that they were right to bring the events to the attention of the staff, that they were not telling tales and that their actions will help others.

Pupils who are victims of bullying may need opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, rebuild self confidence, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed.

Pupils involved in bullying behaviour will also need assistance on an ongoing basis.

These supports may be given as in class support as part of the SPHE programme/Oral Language activities/ Drama.

The idea of restorative justice, anger management, mindfulness may be used in an age appropriate setting.

The Anti-Bullying Policy will be used to reinforce positive expectations from all pupils.

SCP team will assist with group/individual work as deemed appropriate.

Autism Awareness Week, Lá na gCultúr, etc will be celebrated in order to raise awareness of inclusivity.

8. 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.

9. 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, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race or membership of the Travelling community

10. This policy was reviewed by stakeholders and ratified by the Board of Management on **16/11/2021.**

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, and is readily accessible to parents and pupils on request and provided to the Parents Association, Le Chéile.

A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

12. 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, be readily accessible to parents and pupils on request, and provided to the Parents Association, Le Chéile. A record of the review and its outcome will be made readily available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Denis Bohane Cathaoirleach, Bord Bainistíochata

Máire Ní Nuanáin Príomhoide

Date of next review: Mí na Samhna 2022

Appendix 1: Building a positive school culture and climate

The following are actions that the school will endeavour to promote to help build and maintain a positive school culture and climate and to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour.

- Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times
- Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school
- Display key respect messages in classrooms and around the school. Involve the pupils in the development of the messages
- Catch pupils being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention
- Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN
- Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful language are absent
- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines
- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media
- Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use
- Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules
- Actively involve the parents and/or Parents Association, Le Chéile, in awareness raising campaigns around social media
- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school
- Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas
- All staff actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour
- School staff can get pupils to help them identify 'hot spots' and 'hot times' for bullying in the school

Appendix 2 Template for recording bullying behaviour

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name _____ Class _____

2. Names(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

3. Source of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es)*)

Pupil concerned	
Other pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	

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

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
Other	

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		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

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9. Details of actions taken

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Signed: _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date _____

Date submitted to Principal _____