



Tag:/Re: Anti-Bullying Policy / Polasaí Frith-Bhulaíocht

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 Gaelscoil Moshíológ, a multid denominational, co-educational Gaelscoil, 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 is based on inclusivity.
 - encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
 - promotes respectful relationships across the school community;
 - Effective Leadership
 - A school-wide approach
 - A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact
 - Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that-
 - Build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
 - Explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying;
 - Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
 - Supports for staff
 - Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
 - Ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy
3. In accordance with the Anti-Bullying 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.
- Cyberbullying and
- Identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the **Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools**.

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows: (see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):

The relevant teachers in this school are all class teachers, special education teachers and Príomhoide.

Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows (see Section 6.5 of the Anti-Bullying Procedure for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):

School-wide approach

- 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.
- The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extra-curricular activities. Pupils will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.
- Whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develops an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it – prevention and intervention.
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community.
- 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 monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.

**Use of personal communication technology devices within the school is not permitted. Any child who is using a personal device during school hours will have the device withdrawn and parents will be asked to collect from the office.*

- Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school to be included in student journals and displayed publicly in classrooms and in common areas of the school.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils, copies are made available to all parent(s)/guardian(s) from the school porch, on the school website and at orientation day for Junior Infants each June.
- Positive behaviour is encouraged and celebrated weekly at weekly assembly through the promotion of friendship and awarding of Cárta Glas & Dalta na Seachtaine.
- 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.
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell.
- The development of an Acceptable Usage Policy in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored, as is the pupils' use of mobile phones.

Implementation of curricula

- The full implementation of the SPHE, Croí na Scoile (Naí.Bheaga, Naí. Mhóra, Rang 1 2022-2023) and the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes, e.g. Friends for Life, Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme.
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programme at primary level. These lessons, delivered by the community Gardaí, when available, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying.
- The school will organise annually an outside agency/expert group to speak senior classes regarding Safe Internet Use highlighting dangers of cyberbullying and inappropriate internet use.

Links to other policies

- Code of Behaviour, Child Protection Policy, Supervision of Pupils, Acceptable Use Policy, Attendance.
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 (see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post -Primary Schools):

Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

(Gaelscoil Moshíológ will adhere to Section 6.8.9 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures)

The primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame).

Reporting Bullying Behaviour

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.

- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.
- If a parent has a concern of alleged bullying, a monitoring form can be filled in during breaktime by supervising staff to ascertain whether or not there is a valid concern.

Investigating and dealing with incidents: Style of approach (see Section 6.8.9)

- 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 should take a calm, unemotional problem solving approach.
- Where possible incidents should be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should seek answers to questions 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 at first. Thereafter, all 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 everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements.
- In cases 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 actions (by reference to the school policy). The school should give parent(s)/guardian(s) the opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken and the supports being provide 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 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 parents/guardians) that in any situation where the 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 judgement, take the following factors into account:
 - Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased.
 - Whether the 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 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 the 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 the parent(s)/guardian(s) have exhausted the school's complaints procedures and are still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Recording of Bullying Behaviour

It is imperative that all the recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner. The school's procedure for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

Informal - Pre-determination that bullying has occurred

- All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them. Consideration needs to be given to where the records will be made e.g. incident book. 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 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.

Formal Stage 1 – Determination that Bullying has occurred

- 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.

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) Where the school has decided as part of its anti-bullying policy that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the Principal. These records will be kept in the student's file in the office.

Established Intervention Strategies

- Teacher/pupil interviews
- Negotiating agreement 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 parents/guardians to support school interventions
- Circle time

- Implementation of disciplinary sanctions as per school Code of Behaviour.
7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows (see Section 6.8.16 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):
- 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 to build resilience.
 - 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 the bullying or involved with the bullying behaviour.

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

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. The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under the 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.

10. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 12/03/2018

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, is readily accessible to parents 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.

12. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once every school year. Written notification that review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, will be readily accessible to parents and pupils in the school porch 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: *Melanie Ní Shuinn*

(Cathaoirleach Bord Bainistíochta)

Signed: *Carol Scott*

(Príomhoide)

Date: 20/09/2022

Date: 20/09/2022

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Date of next review: September 2023