



## **Anti-Bullying Policy**

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 Croghan, 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.

### **Key Principles of Best Practice**

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 (See Appendix 1) 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; involves collaboration among and between staff & pupils and promotes respectful relationships across the school community; encourages the work of the student council in this area.
- 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, 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.

### **The Definition of Bullying**

In accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools bullying is defined as follows:

*'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 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 and appears as Appendix 2 of this document.

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

- The class teacher(s) initially.
- The Principal thereafter, if necessary.

All Teaching Staff, with the support of SNAs, will investigate and record incidents of bullying behaviour.

### **Our Education and Prevention Strategies**

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 as follows (see Section 6.5 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):

- Prevention and awareness-raising measures across all aspects of bullying and strategies to engage pupils in addressing problems when they arise. In particular, such strategies need to build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils and provide opportunities for pupils to develop a positive sense of self-worth.
- Prevention and awareness-raising measures focusing on cyber-bullying educating pupils on appropriate online behaviour and informing pupils how to stay safe while online.

There are a number of curriculum components and programmes which are particularly relevant to the prevention of bullying and the promotion of respect for diversity and inclusiveness.

- The SPHE curriculum makes specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the inter-related areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships.
- The Stay Safe & RSE programmes at primary level are personal safety skills programmes which seek to enhance children's self-protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying.

Various other social, health and media education programmes can further help to address the problem of bullying behaviour. This work can be extended into many other areas such as Art, Drama, Religious Education, and Physical Education. Co-operation and group



enterprise can be promoted through team sports as well as through practical subjects. Sporting activities in particular can provide excellent opportunities for channelling and learning how to control aggression. GAA coaching is offered to some classes from outside agencies and class teachers are also involved in coaching the school's football teams.

### **Our Procedures on Bullying Behaviour**

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). With this in mind the school's procedures are as follows:

- a) In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher(s) will exercise his/her/their professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred, what type if it has and how best the situation might be resolved.
- b) 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.
- c) Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.
- d) 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.
- e) It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset.

- f) Teachers will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents.
- g) Initial investigations of bullying will be done in class where possible but some incidents might be best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- h) 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.
- i) When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher(s) 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.
- j) 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 should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements.
- k) Each member of a group will be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher.
- l) Where the relevant teacher(s) has/have 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 should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
- m) It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s).
- n) In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher(s) that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken. The school should give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils.

- o) It must also 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.
- p) 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.
- q) An additional follow-up meeting with parents of the children involved may take place after an appropriate time to ensure that the matter has been resolved satisfactorily.
- r) 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.
- s) 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 right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

### **Recording Bullying Behaviour**

Noting and reporting of bullying behaviour is to be documented using the template for Recording Bullying Behaviour (Appendix 3). All records must be maintained in accordance with relevant Data Protection legislation. Scoil Bhríde's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour will adhere to the following:

- Parents/guardians need to be aware that any allegation of bullying they make to the principal, deputy Principal or teacher must be recorded on the specified template and following this the parent /guardian of the alleged bully must immediately be informed about the allegation.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of alleged bullying behaviour must be investigated.
- Records will be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same.



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- If it is established that bullying has occurred, appropriate written records will be used to assist efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved

### **The School's Programme of Support**

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying involves a whole school approach. Given the complexity of bullying behaviour, no one intervention/support programme works in all situations. Therefore various approaches and intervention strategies may be used including suggesting that parents seek referrals from appropriate outside agencies, in order to receive further support for the pupils and their families, if needed.

### **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.

### **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.


This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_.

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website, is 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 and the patron, if requested.



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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, be readily 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.

Signed:   
Chairperson of Board of Management

Date: 28/2/24

Signed:   
Principal

Date: 28/2/2024

Date for Review: 2024-2025

## **APPENDIX 1: Practical Tips for building a Positive School Culture and Climate**

The following are some practical tips for immediate actions that can be taken to help build 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, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.
- Catch them 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 and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN.
- Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.
- Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use. Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.
- Follow-up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.
- Actively involve parents and/or the Parents' Association 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 can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- Ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.
- School staff can get pupils to help them to identify bullying 'hot spots' and 'hot times' for bullying. Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor



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- areas, changing rooms, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision. Hot times tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when pupils are in the playground/school yard or moving classrooms.

## **APPENDIX 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, email, 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) that 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 possessions e.g. 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.



### Appendix 3: 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

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

Pupil concerned	
Other pupil(s)	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

#### 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	Member 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 1)

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
(Relevant Teacher 1)

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 4: How You Can Support Your Child

### (A) Support Re Cyber Bullying

### (B) Support Re Other Types of Bullying

#### (A) Support Re Cyber Bullying

We endorse the advice given from the Irish 'Sticks and Stones' Anti-Bullying Programme. A representative, Patricia Kennedy, wrote the following words in the Irish Daily Mail on October 31, 2012:

**"Cyberbullying is NOT 24/7; it's only 24/7 if a child is allowed access to their phone or the internet.** Don't let your own ignorance get in the way of common sense. A simple rule is 'no phones after bedtime.' Have a drawer in the kitchen that all phones are left in. Try turning off the WIFI when you are going to bed to make sure there are no 3am online arguments. The anti-bullying initiative I represent, Sticks and Stones, work with children from all backgrounds, from designated disadvantaged schools to fee-paying schools, and **we are constantly surprised at the level of innocence that most children have in relation to the 'friends' they make online.** They don't think there are any dangers involved in chatting with strangers online, and they don't think there are any repercussions involved for them regarding what they post. ... In our anti-bullying workshops, children tell us one of the reasons they don't 'tell' about bullying is that parents 'overreact'. Don't be that parent. **If your child tells you that they are being bullied** — don't lose your temper; above all don't threaten to take their phone or internet access away — you're just guaranteeing they'll never tell you anything again. Remain calm and ask questions — who, what, why, where, when. Get the facts, write it down, keep the text/phone messages or take a screen shot from the computer so you are informed when you approach the school, internet or phone provider, or Gardaí. Talk to your children; let them know they can talk to you; keep the channels of communication open."

### **Establish Rules about Technology Use**

- Establish rules about appropriate use of computers, mobile phones, and other technology. For example, be clear about what sites they can visit and what they are permitted to do when they're online. Show them how to be safe online.
- Help them be smart about what they post or say. Tell them not to share anything that could hurt or embarrass themselves or others. Once something is posted, it is out of their control whether someone else will forward it.
- Encourage kids to think about who they want to see the information and pictures they post online. Should complete strangers see it? Real friends only? Friends of friends? Think about how people who aren't friends could use it.
- Tell kids to keep their passwords safe and not share them with friends. Sharing passwords can compromise their control over their online identities and activities.

### **(B) Support on Other Types of Bullying**

- Teaching a child to say "NO" in a good assertive tone of voice will help deal with many situations. A child's self image and body language may send out messages to potential bullies.
- Parents should approach their child's teacher by appointment if the bullying is school related. It is important for you to understand that bullying in school can be difficult for teachers to detect because of the large numbers of children involved. Teachers will appreciate bullying being brought to light. School bullying requires that parents and teachers work together for a resolution.
- Sometimes parental advice to a child is to "hit back" at the bully if the abuse is physical. This is not always realistic as it requires a huge amount of courage and indeed sometimes makes the situation worse.
- Children should not be encouraged to engage in violent behaviour. Teaching children to be more assertive and to tell is far more positive and effective.
- It is important to be realistic; it will not be possible for a single child to assert his/her rights if attacked by a group. Children should be advised to get away and tell in situations such as this.



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- Keep an account of incidents to help you assess how serious the problem is. Many children with a little help overcome this problem very quickly.

### **What If Your Child Is Bullying?**

1. Don't panic. This may be a temporary response to something else in the child's life e.g. a new baby, a death in the family, a difficult home problem etc. Give your child an opportunity to talk about anything that could be upsetting him/her.
2. Don't punish bullying by being a bully yourself. Hitting and verbal attack will make the situation worse. Talk to your child and try to find out if there is a problem. Explain how the victim felt. Try to get the child to understand the victim's point of view. This would need to be done over time.
3. Bullies often suffer low self esteem. Use every opportunity you can to praise good, considerate, helpful behaviour. Don't only look for negatives.
4. Talk to your child's teacher and find out more about your child's school behaviour. Enlist the teacher's help in dealing with this. It is important that you both take the same approach.
5. If the situation is serious you may need to ask the school or G.P. to refer your child to the child guidance clinic for help.