



ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Section I Rationale

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 Bunscoil Rinn an Chabhlaigh 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. This policy consists of 14 Sections, as follows:-

Section II Key Principles

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 staff and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

1. A positive school culture and climate which
 - a. is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity
 - b. encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment
2. promotion of respectful relationships across the school community
3. Effective leadership
4. A whole school approach
5. A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact
6. Implementation of education and prevention strategies that
 - a. build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils
 - b. explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying
 - c. target discrimination in relation to: age; gender; marital status; family status; disability; member of the travelling community; race; sexual orientation; religion
7. Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils
8. Supports for staff in dealing with bullies and support for staff members who are victims of bullying
9. Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour
10. On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy

Section III Definition of 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) which is repeated over time

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying

1. Deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of **relational bullying**
2. **Cyber-Bullying:** Bullying carried out through the use of internet and mobile phone technologies. Being the target of inappropriate or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying. Cyberbullying does not require face to face contact, it can occur at any time (day or night). The procedures recently published by the Department of Education and Skills say “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
3. **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.

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

Section IV Relevant Teacher(s)

The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are)

1. Class Teacher(s) of the children involved
2. Playground Supervision Coordinator: Mrs Annemarie Kelleher
3. Teacher(s) on Playground Supervision, if relevant
4. Principal / Deputy Principal

Section V Education and Prevention Strategies

The education and prevention strategies that will be used by the school are as follows

1. **School Vision and Ethos as a Catholic School**
 - a. The Catholic Ethos of the school encourages positive attitudes to respect, inclusivity and equality. This permeates all aspects of the school day and throughout the teaching of the curriculum

- b. Positive self-esteem is fostered among the pupils by celebrating individual differences, by acknowledging good behaviour and by providing opportunities for success – Mo Chumas Abú
- c. Teachers and Ancillary Staff will at all times endeavour to encourage pupils to show respect for each other by modelling respectful behaviour and language
- d. Positive reinforcement by teachers in classroom setting (Class dojo, Students of the week, Golden time, Traffic Lights, Yard stars, stickers, Ticketing System, Target Cards)
- e. School assembly
- f. Parents contribute to and support the school's policy on bullying by encouraging positive behaviour both at home and at school, by being vigilant for signs and symptoms that their child is being bullied or is bullying others, by communicating concerns to the school

2. Creation of a culture of "telling"

- a. Teachers should repeatedly reinforce the message that if anyone is the victim of bullying behaviour, they should not retaliate in any way, but they should tell an adult.
- b. Class lessons to be provided to enable pupils "how to tell" (telling protocol) – Say NO, Get AWAY and TELL someone you trust – *Stay Safe Rules*
- c. Promoting the role of the Bystander: Bystanders can be the key to resolving bullying and if anyone witnesses bullying behaviour, they should always tell a teacher. This is not telling tales but a means of protecting victims.
- d. Raising the awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour by
 - i. Displaying anti-bullying posters in prominent places around the school environment.
 - ii. Engaging in formal teaching of 'telling' regularly, within the class setting through RE and SPHE programmes

3. Other strategies

- a. **Formal programmes of work** are a vital element in raising children's self-esteem and equipping children to cope with bullying behaviour e.g. Alive-O, Walk Tall, RSE, Webwise, Stay Safe, etc
- b. **Social Skills Development Programmes** are used in all classes to address bullying issues and to encourage children to talk about incidents of bullying with their parents and teachers. Programmes such as Socially Speaking, Zippys Friends, Friends For Life, Fun Friends are methodologies which are used to discuss and explore issues of bullying
- c. **All teachers are required to be vigilant on** yard duty and to monitor repeat offenders
- d. Immediate **affirmation of children who report incidents** of bullying which they have witnessed
- e. Each class to have a set of class rules which compliment the school's Code of Behaviour
- f. **The Stay Safe Programme** will be fully implemented in the school
- g. **Information** relating to cyber-bullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying will be made available on the school website
- h. As per our **Mobile phone policy** children are not allowed to have mobile phones or other electronic devices switched on during school hours.

Section VI Procedures for Investigation

The class teacher will have primary responsibility for investigating alleged cases of bullying. However, dependent on the seriousness of the actions involved, the class teacher may decide to seek the assistance of the Principal/Deputy Principal and the Yard Behaviour Co-ordinator.

The primary aim will be to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved rather than to apportion blame.

1. All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated and recorded by the class teacher. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This will be done in a calm manner, setting an example of dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner

- a. Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), taxi escorts, caretakers are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the class teacher
- b. Where there has been a report of an incident during break time involving students in one class the class teacher will investigate. If a number of classes are involved the teacher can liaise with Deputy Principal to assist in any investigation

2. Incidents will generally be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved

3. 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. Where appropriate, those involved will be asked to write down their account of the incident(s)

4. Parents will be contacted by the Principal/ DP if the situation is serious enough at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy). Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and to assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible. The school will 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

5. It will be made clear to a pupil engaged in bullying behaviour that he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and code of Behaviour and there will be sanctions in place as per our Code Of Behaviour Policy, *See Website*. In certain incidents if the school feels that temporary suspension is warranted the Principal following consultation with the parents may ask the Parents to take the child home.

6. Because Bunscoil Rinn an Chabhlaigh is an inclusive school, the school will not encourage the exclusion or separation of pupils even after bullying behaviour has occurred.

7. 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 will be recorded by the relevant teacher and given to the DP

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:

- a. Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased
- b. Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable
- c. Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable
- d. Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal

8. Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents will be referred, as appropriate, to the Complaints Procedures as per the Department of Education.

Section VII Procedures for recording bullying behaviour

All records must be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour is as follows:-

1. The relevant teacher will use the appropriate template, Appendix 1 to record the bullying behaviour. This form will be passed/ filed by the Deputy Principal.
2. Where appropriate, additional notes and details will be attached to the form, particularly in cases where the bullying was not resolved within 20 days of the initial investigation.
3. Details of the file will be recorded on the Aladdin System by the Class Teacher.

Section VIII Actions to be taken by the school

1. Relevant teachers will investigate and inform parents as per section VI
2. The class teacher will inform the yard co-ordinator who will note the children in question in the yard book so that all supervising teachers can be as vigilant as possible
3. Once the investigation is complete, the school will organise any necessary interventions as needed (social groups, play pals, reward systems etc)
4. A meeting, with follow up meetings will be scheduled with parents until the bullying is deemed resolved by all parties

Section IX Support for pupils affected by bullying

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows

1. Victims

- a. Victims are reassured from the outset that they are not to blame
- b. Class Teachers will observe opportunities during class time to raise the self-esteem of victims
- c. Strategies for restoring self-esteem are explored between teacher and parents/guardians
- d. Where deemed necessary, the child in consultation with parents may be referred for counselling
- e. The parents of the pupils concerned will be advised to contact the local Gardai if appropriate

2. Bullies

- a. Where deemed necessary, the child in consultation with parents may be referred for counselling. They may need to learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others. Empathy awareness needs to be developed
- b. Bullies may be chosen for Social Skills intervention sessions and personal development groups
- c. Clinical referral and assessment may be necessary

Section X 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. Accordingly instances of bullying will be dealt with in tandem with the school's overall code of behaviour. The school may refer cases to relevant external agencies and authorities where 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 and advice may also be sought from the TUSLA with a view to drawing up an appropriate response, such as a management plan.

The school is obliged by law to refer any child who displays repeated bullying behaviour to Tusla, the Child and Family Agency.

Section XI Bullying outside of the school premises

1. Incidents of bullying can extend beyond the school and the journey to and from school is one which can provide particular opportunities for bullying to occur.
2. In certain cases too it may be necessary to invite assistance from formal agencies such as Gardai, (J.L.O) Health Board, Local Youth Groups etc
3. The school will constantly remind parents of the dangers of "cyber- bullying" as can happen with the use of social networking sites and mobile phones.
4. The school cannot be responsible for disagreements between pupils that happen outside the school grounds but will make reasonable efforts to cooperate with parents in assisting them to resolve the issues especially if their actions are affecting their learning and emotional health in school.

Section XII 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

Section XIII 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

Section XIV Bullying by Adults:

Intra-staff Bullying
Teacher – Child Bullying
Parent – Teacher Bullying
Teacher – Parent Bullying
Parent/Visitor – Child



In any case of bullying by an adult, the principal should be informed immediately, and if deemed necessary, the Board of Management should be informed in writing. The person reporting the bullying can be the victim or a person who has observed the bullying first hand.

Section XV Evaluation of policy effectiveness:

The evaluation of the policy will happen on both an informal (through teacher observation) and formal basis use of surveys and questionnaires).

Success Criteria:

1. Positive feedback from teachers, parents and pupils
2. Well-being and happiness of the whole school community in the light of incidents of bullying behaviour encountered and fewer problems in the yard.
3. Increase in numbers of children reporting

Section XV Adoption, Publication, Implementation and Review

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____ [date]

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Council.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and readily accessible to parents and pupils on request as well as provided to the Parents' Council. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the

Signed: _____
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: _____
(Principal)

Date: _____

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____

Appendix 1



Behaviour Report Form

1. Name _____ Class _____

2. Name(s) and class(es) of other pupil(s) engaged in the inappropriate behaviour

3. Source of misbehaviour 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 incident (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 misbehaviour

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

Physical Aggression	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cyber-bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>
Damage to Property	<input type="checkbox"/>	Intimidation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Isolation/Exclusion	<input type="checkbox"/>	Malicious Gossip	<input type="checkbox"/>
Name Calling	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. Brief Description of behaviour and its impact

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8. Details of actions taken

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Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____