

Scoil Chroí Bullying



Íosa Anti- Policy

In accordance with the (Welfare) Act 2000 and

issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of Scoil Chroí Íosa, Blarney 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.

requirements of the Education the Code of Behaviour Guidelines

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 for practical tips on promoting this) 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. We aim to look into devising a Student Council.
- 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.
- Procedures, as far as possible, must be adhered to.

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.

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.

Additional information on **characteristics associated with bullying** is set out in **Section 4** of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools and appears as **Appendix 3** of this document.

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

- The class teacher(s) initially
- The principal and deputy principal thereafter if necessary

The following **education and prevention strategies**, at the appropriate and relevant level for each class, will be used by the school:

- Prevention and awareness raising measures across all aspects of bullying and involves strategies to engage pupils in addressing problems when they arise. In particular, such strategies need to build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils
- Provide pupils with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth
- Prevention and awareness raising measures focusing on cyber-bullying by educating pupils on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while online
- Teachers can influence attitudes to bullying behaviour in a positive manner
- 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 (covered annually) & 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.

- The work could 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, school clubs and societies as well as through practical subjects **e.g. Lunchtime Pals and Reading Buddies**
- Sporting activities in particular can provide excellent opportunities for channeling and learning how to control aggression. In Scoil Chróí Íosa, we have regular coaching from the local GAA and soccer clubs.
- Yard duty- oral/written report to class teacher after both lunch breaks.
- Children gather in the hall in the morning to avoid creation of 'hot spots'.
- Circle Time throughout the school
- Class and school rules to be discussed in September of each year and to mention the code of behavior and anti-bullying policies at assembly and in class.
- Have positive behavior and anti-bullying on the agenda all the times
- Furnish all teachers and SNAs with Circular 0045/2013: Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary School, PDST Information booklet for Schools and our school conflict sheet. Hard copy available for secretaries, caretakers, bus and taxi drivers, lollipop lady, coaches in

The school's procedures for investigation, follow up and recording of bullying behaviour and established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour 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). With this in mind the schools procedures are as follows:

1. In investigation and dealing with bullying, the teacher(s) will exercise his/her/their professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred, what type it is 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. **'We are a telling class, we are not tell tales'.**
3. 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.
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. Teachers should take 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 class where possible** but some incidents might be best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.

8. 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.
9. 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. Our school conflict sheet, where appropriate, can be used here.
10. 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 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. Where the relevant teacher(s) has/have 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.
13. It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s), **please see (10) above- conflict sheet**.
14. 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.
15. It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where **disciplinary sanctions** are required (in line with the **school's code of behaviour: strategies (a)-(i)** for dealing with unacceptable behavior may be implemented), this is a private matter between the pupils 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. 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. **In incidences where appendix 3 (from the Anti-Bullying Procedures p.43) was deemed necessary, the principal will make a follow up contact with the parents/ guardians of the child being bullied.**
18. 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. **Please see the Parental Complaints Procedure as adopted by the BOM in March 2013 (agreed by CPSMA and INTO).**
19. 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:

The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour will adhere to the following:

(i) While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher(s), the relevant teacher(s) will use his/her/their professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same

(ii) If it is established by the relevant teacher(s) that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher(s) 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

(iii) The relevant teacher(s) must use the recording template at **Appendix 3** (of the Anti-Bullying Procedures p.43) to record the bullying behavior in the following circumstances:

In cases where he/she considers that the bullying behavior has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within **20 school days** after he/she has determined occurred ; and Where the school has decided as part of its anti- bullying policy that **in certain circumstances** bullying behavior must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

(iv) All records must be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation. **The principal will retain these sheets until the child turns 21. The relevant teacher will keep a copy of these sheets for that school year (and possibly keep this in the child's drop file.**

7. 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 so that appropriate outside agencies in order to receive further support for the pupils and their families if needed. **Please refer to section 5 of this document for education and prevention strategies that may be used to support pupils affected by bullying.**

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. This policy was reviewed and adopted by the Board of Management on 29th Nov 2016.

10. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published 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.

11. 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 must be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents Association. A standardized notification which must be use for this purpose is included at Appendix 4 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures (p.44). A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: *Fr. Michael Fitzgerald*
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: *Mary Magner*
(Principal)

Date: 29th November 2016

Date of next review: November 2017

Appendix 1

Key Elements of a positive school culture and climate

- The school acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment.
- The school acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual and his/her worth as a human being.
- The school promotes positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among all its members.
- The school prohibits vulgar, offensive, sectarian or other aggressive behaviour or language by any of its members.
- The school has a clear commitment to promoting equity in general and gender equity in particular in all aspects of its functioning.
- The school has the capacity to change in response to pupils' needs.
- The school identifies aspects of curriculum through which positive and lasting influences can be exerted towards forming pupils' attitudes and values.
- The school takes particular care of "at risk" pupils and uses its monitoring systems to facilitate early intervention where necessary and it responds to the needs, fears or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner.
- The school recognises the need to work in partnership with and keep parents informed on procedures to improve relationships on a school-wide basis.
- The school recognises the role of parents in equipping the pupil with a range of life-skills.
- The school recognises the role of other community agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying.
- The school promotes habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the interdependence of people in groups and communities.
- The school promotes qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among all its members both in school and out of school.
- Staff members share a collegiate responsibility, under the direction of the Principal, to act in preventing bullying/aggressive behaviour by any member of the school community.

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

Appendix 2

DEFINITION AND TYPES OF BULLYING

2.1 Definition of bullying

2.1.1 In the context of these procedures, bullying is defined as unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

2.1.2 The following types of bullying behaviour are included in this non-exhaustive definition:

- (i) deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying;
- (ii) cyber-bullying; and
- (iii) 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.

2.1.3 In addition, in the context of these procedures 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.

2.1.4 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 this definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour. A single incident can have a serious effect on a pupil and may also constitute harassment which is legally prohibited in schools under equality legislation. Harassment is any form of unwanted conduct related to any of the nine discriminatory grounds (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).

Information on the impact, indicators and other characteristics of bullying behaviour is set out in Sections 3 and 4 of these Procedures.

2.2 Types of bullying

The following are some of the types of bullying behaviour that can occur amongst pupils:

- o **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.
- o **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.

o **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 on person (girl or boy); non-verbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumours about a person or giving them the "silent treatment".

o **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, e-mail, 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.

o **Name calling:** Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) which 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.

o **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 locker or 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.

o **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

CHARACTERISTICS ASSOCIATED WITH BULLYING

It is important to recognise that any pupil can be bullied or can engage in bullying behaviour.

4.1 The pupil who engages in bullying behaviour

4.1.1 A significant proportion of bullying is not merely behavioural but is rooted in a lack of respect for diversity and in social inequalities. "Prejudice-based" or "identity-based" bullying can be a significant factor in bullying behaviour.

4.1.2 Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour tend to display aggressive attitudes combined with a low level of self-discipline. They may lack any sense of remorse convincing themselves that the other person deserves the treatment they are receiving.

4.1.3 Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour can be attention seeking: setting out to impress bystanders and responding to the reaction their behaviour provokes. They can lack the ability to empathise. They can appear unaware or indifferent to the other person's feelings. It is of note that pupils who exhibit bullying behaviour often suffer from a lack of confidence and have low self-esteem.

4.1.4 However, it must also be recognised that pupils who engage in bullying behaviour do not always intend to bully or may not recognise the potential negative impact of their words and actions on others.

4.1.5 It is not uncommon to find that pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may also have been bullied themselves.

4.2 The pupil who is bullied

4.2.1 Any pupil through no fault of their own may be a target of bullying. It is common in the course of normal interaction for pupils to tease or taunt each other. However, at a certain point, teasing and taunting may become forms of bullying behaviour. As pupils can be particularly quick to notice differences in others, pupils who are perceived as different in some way can be more prone to encounter such behaviour. However, the pupils who are most at risk of being bullied are those who react in a vulnerable and distressed manner. The seriousness and duration of the bullying behaviour can be related to the pupil's continuing response to the verbal, physical or psychological aggression.

4.2.2 Pupils who are bullied often experience difficulties in speaking up about bullying. The difficulties include:

- (i) Fear of reprisals;
- (ii) Concerns about being perceived as a "tell-tale" for reporting bullying;
- (iii) Concerns about "getting into trouble" with the principal or teacher for reporting bullying;
- (iv) Not having evidence to back up a bullying allegation;
- (v) Not knowing how the matter will be dealt with by the school; and
- (vi) Not feeling fully confident of being believed.

4.3 More vulnerable pupils

4.3.1 While bullying can happen to any pupil, it is known that some may be more vulnerable to or at risk of experiencing bullying. Such vulnerable groups include pupils with disabilities or special educational needs, those from ethnic minority and migrant groups, pupils from the Traveller community, lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) pupils and those perceived to be LGBT and pupils of minority religious faiths.

4.3.2 There can be an increased vulnerability to bullying amongst pupils with special educational needs and particularly those who do not understand social cues and/or have difficulty communicating. Some pupils with complex needs may lack understanding of social situations and therefore trust everyone implicitly. Such pupils may be more vulnerable because they do not have the same social skills or capacity as others to recognise and defend themselves against bullying behaviour. Research suggests that children with

disabilities and with special educational needs (SEN) are more likely to be bullied than others. Bullying can also have a more severe impact on such children. For example, some studies which compare the impact of bullying on children with and without certain disabilities, such as a speech and language difficulty, show that bullying has a greater impact on self-esteem for those with a disability.

4.3.3 Homophobic and transphobic bullying (bullying targeted at those who are or who are perceived to be LGBT) has also been found to be prevalent with evidence that such pupils have particular difficulty in speaking up or reporting the bullying behaviour.

4.4 Where does bullying happen?

Bullying can happen anywhere at any time but there are certain times and places which particularly facilitate bullying.

4.4.1 Cyber-bullying: Access to technology means that cyber-bullying can happen around the clock and the pupil's home may not even be a safe haven from such bullying. Pupils are increasingly communicating in ways that are often unknown to adults and free from supervision. The nature of these technologies means digital content can be shared and seen by a very wide audience almost instantly and is almost impossible to delete permanently. While cyber bullying often takes place at home and at night, the impact can also be felt in school.

4.4.2 Areas of unstructured activity: Bullying in schools frequently takes place in the playground/schoolyard. School grounds with hidden or obscured parts may provide an environment conducive to bullying. Many common playground/schoolyard games present opportunities for bullying because of their physical nature. It is relatively easy to single out and bully another pupil. The noise level masks much of what is going on. The playground/schoolyard provides the opportunity for older pupils to pick on younger pupils. It can also be the setting for bullying by groups. Continuing provocation may eventually lead to a physical fight and ironically in some cases the person being bullied may appear to be the aggressor because he/she finally gives vent to his/her frustration. Toilets, corridors, cloakrooms, locker areas, changing rooms, showers, the gym and assembly hall may be the scene of verbal, psychological and physical bullying. The behaviour of pupils in those areas needs careful monitoring.

4.4.3 Bullying in the classroom: Bullying may also take place in class. It may occur subtly through glances, looks and sniggers but may take the more overt form of physical intimidation. It may also be exacerbated if a classroom atmosphere prevails whereby pupils are allowed to make derogatory comments about their classmates or other teachers. However, teachers need to be alert to the underlying reasons for such comments in case pupils are trying to disclose something which is disturbing them and thus needs further investigation. Bullying may also occur between class periods irrespective of whether the class or the teacher moves.

4.4.4 Coming to and from school: The area immediately outside the school, the local shops and local neighbourhood are often the scenes of bullying. Bullying can also take place at the bus-stop or on the journey to and from school whether the individuals are walking, cycling or on school buses.

