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Scoil Ailbhe

Anti-Bullying Policy

Introduction
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 Ailbhe 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.

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

(a) A positive school culture and climate which;
- is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
- encourages pupils to disclose incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
- promotes respectful relationships across the school community;

(b) effective leadership;
(c) a school-wide approach;
(d) a shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
(e) 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;

(f) effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
(g) supports for staff;
(h) consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
(i) on-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the Anti-Bullying Policy;

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) 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; 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 will 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.

Examples of Bullying Behaviours

General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying:

- Harassment based on any of the nine grounds of equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc;
- Physical aggression;
- Damage to property;
- Name calling;
- Slagging;
- The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person;
- Ooffensive graffiti;
- Extortion;
- Iintimidation;
- Insulting or offensive gestures;
- The "look";
- Invasion of personal space;
- A combination of any of the types listed;

Cyber

- Denigration: spreading rumours, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation;
- Harassment: continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual;
- Impersonation: posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name;
- Flaming: using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight;
- Trickery: fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online;
- Outing: posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images;
- Exclusion: purposefully excluding someone from an online group;
- Silent telephone/mobile phone calls;
- Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls;
- Abusive text messages;
- Abusive email;
- Abusive communication or social networks e.g. Facebook/Ask.fm/Twitter/YouTube or on game consoles;

- Abusive website comments/blogs/pictures;
- Abusive posts on any form of communication technology.

Identity Based Behaviours
Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community)

Homophobic and Transgender:
- Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation;
- Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation;
- Nname calling e.g. gay, queer, lesbian . . . used in a derogatory manner;
- Physical intimidation or attacks;
- Threats.

Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community:
- Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background;
- Exclusion on the basis of any of the above;

Relational:
This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:
- Malicious gossip;
- Isolation & exclusion;
- Ignoring;
- Excluding from the group;
- Taking someone's friends away;
- 'Bitching';
- Spreading rumours;
- Breaking confidence;
- Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear;
- The 'look';
- Use of terminology such as 'nerd' in a derogatory way.

Sexual:
- Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching;
- Harassment;

Special Educational Needs, Disability:
- Name calling;
- Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs;
- Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying;
- Taking advantages of some pupil's vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social satiations and social cues;
- Setting others up to ridicule.

Relevant Teachers
In accordance with the procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools section 6.8.3 and 6.8.4, the relevant teachers for investigating dealing with bullying are;

The relevant teachers in this school are:

- Principal;
- Deputy Principal;
- All teachers;

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

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 Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):

School-wide Approach;

- A school-wide approach to the following of respect for &kindness to, all members of the school community(Kindness Recognition Board);
- 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 extracurricular 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 bulling 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/guardian and the wider community;
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extracurricular activities. Non- teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school;
- Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying Code for the school – to be included in student diary and displayed publicly in classrooms and in common areas of the school;
- The school's Anti-Bullying Policy is discussed with pupils, and all Parents/Guardians are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school (every year);
- The implementation of regular (e.g. per year/per term/ per month/ per week) whole school awareness measures e.g. bullying prevention, parent/guardian seminars, regular school assemblies by principal;
- Buddy Bench available to those who need a friend
- 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 will 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 e.g.:
    - direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class;
    - hand note up with homework;
    - 'Id like you to know' White Post box in Reception
    - make a phone call to the school or to a trusted teacher in the school;

    - get a parent/guardian or friend to tell on your behalf;
    - ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place;
- Parents / Guardians are encouraged to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied. This is reiterated each September by the Principal on Familiarisation Night.
- The Acceptable Usage Policy (AUP) is read and signed by all parents. Access to technology is strictly monitored. Pupils are not permitted to have mobile phones within the school premises or on school outings / tours.

Implementation of Curricula:

- The full implementation of the SPHE, the RSE, and Stay Safe Programmes;
- Continuous professional development for staff in delivering these programmes;
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from the Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme and the R.S.E. programme.
- The Community Gardaí cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying during their talks to 5th and 6th classes;
- The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately;
- The school will implement the advice in 'Sexual Orientation Advice for Schools' (RSE Primary, see booklet);

Links to Other Policies:

- Other school policies, practices, and activities that are particularly relevant to bullying are:
    - Code of Behaviour
    - Child Protection Policy
    - Acceptable Usage Policy

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):

Scoil Ailbhe's Procedures for (A) Reporting and (B) for Investigating & Dealing with Bullying Incidents

(A) Reporting Bullying Behaviour

- Any pupil or parent/guardian may bring a bullying incident to any staff member 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 such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers, cleaners will report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

(B) Procedures for Investigating & Dealing with Incidents

- 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);
- Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parent/guardian) understand this approach.
- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the relevant teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
- Parents /Guardians 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 will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach;
- Where possible, incidents will be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
- 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;
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This will be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict;
- If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first. Afterwards, all those involved will be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member will be asked for his account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements;
- Each member of the group will be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after the interview by the teacher; it may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s);
- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred and following consultation with the Principal, the parent/guardian of the parties involved may be contacted at this early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the action being taken (by reference to school policy). The school will encourage parent/guardian to reinforce or support the action being taken by the school and the supports provided to the pupils;
- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him how he is in breach of the school's Anti-Bullying P and efforts will be made to try to encourage him to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;
- It will also be made clear to all involved that, in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his parent/guardian and the school;
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved will 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;
- Formal Recording: **Appendix 3**: **In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has**

occurred, it will be recorded by the relevant teacher using the recording template, Appendix 3;

- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher will, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:
    - Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
    - Whether any issues between the parties have resolved as far as is practicable;
    - Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable;
    - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or Principal or Deputy Principal;
- Where a parent/guardian is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent/guardian will be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures;
- In the event that a parent/guardian has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school will advise the parent/guardian of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Recording of Bullying Behaviour

Scoil Ailbhe's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour will adhere to the following:

- All records will be maintained in accordance with relevant data protection legislation;
- While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher will use his/her professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same;
- If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher will 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;
- The relevant teacher will use the recording template, **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;
    b) In certain circumstances where the bullying behaviour is deemed to be of a more serious nature it will be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

In each of the circumstances at (a) and (b) above, the recording template, **Appendix 3,** will be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable. The timeline for recording bullying behaviour, **Appendix 3,** does not in any way preclude the relevant teacher from consulting with the Principal or Deputy Principal at an earlier stage in relation to a case.

At least once in every term, the principal will provide a report to the B.O.M. setting out:

a) **Overall, the number of cases (Appendix 3) reported since the previous meeting.**

b) **Confirmation that all have been or are being dealt with in accordance with the Anti-Bullying Policy and procedures laid out therein.**

Bullying as Part of a Continuum of Behaviour

Scoil Ailbhe recognises that bullying behaviour can be part of a continuum of behaviour rather than a stand-alone issue and in some cases where the school has serious concerns in relation to managing the behaviour of a pupil and/or pupil safety, the advice of the National Education Psychological Service (NEPS), HSE & Family Services and/or the Gardaí, as appropriate, will be sought.

Supports for Pupils Affected by Bullying

Scoil Ailbhe recognises that pupils affected by bullying need support. The supports and opportunities that are provided include:

- Participation in activities designed to raise self-esteem, develop friendships and social skills and build resilience. These include pastoral care, buddy/peer mentoring, group work such as circle time and involvement in after school extracurricular activities;
- If pupils require counselling or further supports, the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same;
- Promotion of the understanding that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported;
- After a period of time an opportunity will be offered to the affected student, where the teacher deems is appropriate, to meet with the offending party, to ensure good relations have been restored.

Supports for Pupils Involved in Bullying Behaviour

Scoil Ailbhe recognises that pupils involved in bullying behaviour need assistance. The assistance that is provided includes:

- Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour are given guidance to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others;
- They are encouraged to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills and to become involved in group work, team work and extracurricular activities;
- Teachers and parents assist them by challenging and correcting the behaviour while supporting the child;
- Teachers and parents assist them to develop empathy for the affected pupil.

Ongoing Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Anti-Bully Policy

The effectiveness of the school's anti-bullying policy will be subject to continuous review in the light of incidents of bullying behaviour encountered. The prevention and intervention strategies will be discussed and reviewed in the final term of the school year.

Established Intervention Strategies

- Teacher interviews with pupils;
- Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress;
- Disciplinary approach;
- Working with parent/*guardian* to support school interventions;
- Circle time;
- Implementing sociogram questionnaires. See Appendix B – sample bullying sociogram and sample friendship / anti-bullying questionnaire.

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.

- There are agreed appropriate monitoring and supervision practices in the school.
- Bullying danger spots have been identified.
- Pupils are consulted in the identification of these danger spots.
- The S.P.H.E., R.E., R.S.E., Stay Safe and Individual Education Plans are supports provided to counteract bullying behaviour.
- Inclusion in social skills programmes run by Support Teachers is a further intervention offered when practicable, to develop social skills and improve inclusion.
- The Schools Broadband provider has blocked access to all social networking sites, and restricts access to websites.

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.

Ratification

This policy was reviewed and adopted by the Board of Management on 13th day of Oct 2022. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Council. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron on request.

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 provided to the Parents' Council. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: *John O' Loughlin* Date:13/10/22
(Chairperson of the Board of Management)

Signed: *Bríd Ryan* Date:13/10/22
(Principal)