

Scoil Mhuire Anti-Bullying Policy

The Scoil Mhuire school community believes that each pupil has a right to an education free from fear and intimidation.

The teachers in this school together with other staff members seek, on an ongoing basis, to cultivate an environment in the school that is free from bullying.

This school regards bullying as a serious infringement of individual rights and a serious threat to the self-esteem and self-confidence of targeted pupil(s). Therefore, this school does not tolerate bullying of any kind.

Every report of bullying is treated seriously and dealt with, having due regard for the well being of the targeted pupil(s) and the perpetrator(s).

The immediate priority, should a bullying situation arise, is ending the bullying, (*thereby protecting the person(s) being targeted*) and resolving the issues and restoring the relationships involved insofar as is practicable using a 'Reform, not Blame' approach.

All pupils are expected to contribute to the creation and maintenance of a safe environment in the school. On becoming aware of any bullying situation in or outside the school, involving or having an impact on members of the school community, they should notify a trusted responsible adult. Bullying behaviour is too serious not to report.

Pupils' participation in school life in general is encouraged through existing school structures. Awareness of bullying, and willingness to take action to prevent or **stop it**, is part of this participation.

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

- **A positive school culture and climate** which is based on a clear code of behaviour and is respectful of diversity, is inclusive, models respect, emphasises positive reinforcement, encourages upstanders and a culture of telling, emphasises the importance of feeling happy and safe in our school. All staff members share a responsibility to be upstanders and to report bullying. This includes; teachers, S.N.As, secretarial staff, cleaners. This extends to those who work with children in a pastoral role, or as visitors, or on a voluntary basis. All of whom should be made aware of the Anti-Bullying Policy. This policy aims to :

Implement, educate and offer 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;**
- **Consistently record, investigate and follow-up bullying behaviour**

The definition of bullying which has been adopted in Scoil Mhuire is:

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 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.

General Behaviours, Types and examples of bullying

- 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
- Offensive graffiti
- Extortion
- Intimidation
- Insulting or offensive gestures
- The "look"
- Invasion of personal space
- A combination of any of the behaviours listed above

Cyber-Bullying consists of:

- 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 messages using another person's name
- Trickery: Getting another person to share information which you share online
- Exclusion: Leaving someone out of an online group deliberately
- Cyber-stalking: Ongoing cyber stalking making someone feel unsafe
- Abusive/silent calls, text messages, e-mails
- Abusive communication on social networks
- Abusive comments on blogs/pictures
- Abusive posts on any form of communication technology

Education and prevention strategies that will be used by the school are as follows:

School-wide approach

- A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.
- The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the un-acceptability 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 bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it-prevention and intervention.
- Professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teacher(s)
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra- curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.

- Pilot establishment of a School Safety Team, which promote positive relationships between children, especially between older and younger pupils, encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school to be included in student journals and displayed publicly in classrooms and in common areas of the school.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parent(s)/guardian(s) are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school (every year).
- The implementation of regular (per month/per term) whole school awareness measures e.g. monthly School Safety Team meeting, make a class video on a theme, adoption of calm approach to dealing with bullying, pupil education in how to be an upstander rather than a bystander, cyber-bullying talks for parents/guardians and children, a dedicated notice board in the school and classrooms on the promotion of friendship, and bullying prevention; annual Friendship Week and parent(s)/guardian(s) seminars; annual or term or monthly student surveys; regular school or year group assemblies by principal, deputy principal,
- Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
- Pilot niggles box in lobby for senior classes
- Identify clear protocols to encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied.
- Prevention strategy includes an Acceptable Use Policy in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored, as is the pupils' use of mobile phones, see IT policy as displayed in Computer Room .
- Supports being used in the school at present include: referral to Cottage Homes Family Support Service, HSCL , S.E.S.S advice , N.E.P.S. Other supports outside the school which may be accessed as policy evolves include ISPCC.

How to tell and Who to tell if bullying happens in our school:

Who to tell	Class teacher	Learning Support Teacher	Dep Principal	Principal
How	Note Note in Niggles box Go up to his/her desk	At your slot in your Maths Group	At maths group slot	On corridor in mornings, before/after break
	In line at break	On corridor	On corridor	At lunch Time
	On way in from break	In Yard	Ask permission	Ask permission
	Straight after school		Note in Niggles Box	Pop note in niggles box
	Ask your parent to write a note or phone school		In yard	
	In yard			
	Fill in the anti-bullying survey			

Procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying.

Roles and responsibilities:

Scoil Mhuire sees the **parent/guardian** as having a primary role in the resolution of bullying. We believe that parents/guardians must make themselves aware of the anti-bullying climate by attending parent talks, attending class meetings, reading the newsletters and notes from Principal on this area. In partnership, we undertake as a school, to provide this information and communicate well the anti-bullying message. **We see the role of the parent in the prevention and monitoring of cyber-bullying as being most important.** Our role is clearly defined in this policy, but we equally wish to emphasise the role of the parent, as bullying can take place in the community and is outside of our control. We expect parents/guardians to follow the calm, resolution-based approach that we are adopting, when dealing

with bullying in school. As per our Mornings Policy/policy For Entry and Exit, appointments must be made to see class teachers to discuss Bullying issues.

The primary aim of our approach to bullying is resolution rather than blame. This is also referred to as a "No Blame Approach."

- The class teacher is initially responsible for investigating and dealing with bullying in his/her own class. However, any teacher who witnesses this behaviour can deal with it. Substitute teachers should deal with reports of bullying as per our policy, reporting any incidences to Ms Slavin .
- teaching and non-teaching staff such as SNAs, secretary, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them ,or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

How bullying reports will be dealt with:

If a report is made , the relevant teacher may investigate this either informally or through the anti-bullying survey. If a survey suggests that a pupil is engaging in bullying then the class teacher will interview the pupil in question discreetly. If the pupil is found to have bullied, then the teacher will ask the child to sign a pledge not to bully again. If the pupil agrees to this, and does not re-offend , then that is the end of the matter for the pupil. However, if a pupil goes on to bully again, for a second time, then the principal is informed and the pupils parents/guardians are also informed. The pupil will be once again asked to sign a pledge not to bully and reminded of the seriousness of this repeated behaviour. If a pupil re-offends for a third or subsequent time, then the principal is immediately informed and parents will be notified. The parents/guardians would be expected to prioritise resolving the issue, supporting the school, so as the behaviour does not continue. Should a pupil continue to bully despite these repeated interventions, then the school may seek to impose sanctions such as Internal Exclusion, Suspension or Expulsion, within the guidelines of Tusla.

Recording and Follow Up

Class Log/Yard Log Record/Incident Report/Pupil Promise Interview Sheet

- The teacher on yard duty should fill in an incident report, if deemed necessary and pass on to the child's class teacher
- . All class teachers will keep informal log which records bullying incidents (stored safely)
- Principal should be informed (informally) of all incidents being investigated.
- When surveys produce reports of bullying, Class teachers will keep these for review purposes. The interview sheet completed following the bullying survey will form a record of the follow -up action taken, as it is a main part of our school approach to dealing with bullying incidences.
- Actions taken will be recorded on an Action Taken form

Formal Report of Bullying

The relevant teacher must use the Formal Report of Bullying to record the bullying behaviour **in the following circumstances:**

- Following an interview with a child identified as engaging in this behaviour on the Survey ,who has broken his/her promise , as recorded at the Pupil interview
- When cyber-bullying has occurred
- When the behaviour is deemed as requiring immediate intervention by the Principal .
- This form is also filled in when a 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 occurred; and

This report to be filled in by relevant teacher soon after the incident. Keep a copy and give copy to Principal. Records will be kept securely in Principal's office. They will be kept till a pupil reaches 18, unless this contravenes the pupils rights under Data Protection. Access to this data is limited to those who are directly involved with the pupil in the current school year and to Principal and Dep. Principal.

Established intervention strategies to prevent and to follow-up: Some examples.....

- Anti-bullying survey and follow up interview with class teacher Lessons and guidance to follow up may be brief or may not happen immediately if teacher feels that the pupils need to reflect on incident or cool down or circumstances may dictate the timing of the follow-up.
- Stop, Walk and Talk
- Calm approach ,No-Blame Approach
- Pupils act as upstanders
- Safety committee model inclusion
- Teacher interviews with all pupils, separately, if possible.
- Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process
- Working with parent(s)/guardian(s) to support school interventions e.g. parent/guardian removes device from pupil bullying/being bullied for a time to curb behaviour.
- Circle Time
- Restorative interviews (MAY BE A POLICY DEVELOPMENT SUBJECT TO THE SUCCESS OF A PILOT PROJECT IN AUTUMN 2014)
- Restorative conferencing-possibly as above.
- Referral to outside support agencies, if necessary

Further procedures may be introduced and policy altered in MAY 2023.

Implementation of curricula-principles to develop a healthy anti-bullying culture include:

- The full implementation of the SPHE and CSPE curricula and the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes: cool School, Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme
- School wide delivery of lessons on Relational aggression (as decided appropriate by teachers and SPHE coordinator e.g. Cyber Bullying - Web wise Primary teachers' resources),
- Homophobic and Transphobic Bullying-Standard definition and description of sexuality adopted by staff (see RSE Policy). Strong emphasis on giving pupils the appropriate language and awareness of inappropriate language in common use around this area.
- Diversity and Interculturalism, Yellow Flag Programme. Amnesty, Trocaire
- Annual cyber-bullying speaker visit and workshop for both parents and pupils. Parents/guardians of senior class pupils are expected to attend
- Behaviour management programmes in use with pupils with S.E.N. related behavioural issues
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes at primary level. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardai, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying
- 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), at a level appropriate for the needs of the pupils, as determined by the teachers, SPHE coordinator ,and Principal.

Links to other policies

- The School policies and procedures that are particularly relevant to bullying are our Scoil Mhuire Code of Behaviour, Scoil Mhuire Child Protection policy, Yard/Supervision Policy, Scoil Mhuire Relationships and Sexuality Policy, Policy for Entering And Exiting School, Acceptable Use policy, Scoil Mhuire Policy on Attendance, Sporting activities-procedures and policies, policies relating to parent-teacher communication and arrangements for meetings.

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 19th October, 2022.

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

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 (or where none exists, be otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: _____

Signed: _____

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

(Principal)

Date: _____

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____

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Signed: *A. Phil Ryan*

(Chairperson of Board of Management)
Date: 7/12/22

Signed: *Siol*

(Principal)
Date: 7/12/22

Date of next review: September '22