



## **Scoil Áine Naofa, Loch Cútra, Code of Behaviour**

In compliance with Section 23 of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000, the Board of Management and staff of Scoil Áine Naofa, Loch Cútra have formulated a Code of Behaviour. This is a review of the existing policy. This review was co-ordinated by the principal.

In *Loch Cútra* national school, we hope to foster this ideal in co-operation with our parents/guardians. We have adopted a positive code of behaviour with emphasis on encouragement and reward so that good behaviour can prevail in our school.

The Board of Management of the school has ultimate responsibility for behaviour in the school. Within the school, the overall day to day responsibility for behaviour rests with the Principal. Each teacher has the responsibility for the maintenance of good behaviour and good order within his/her classroom while sharing a common responsibility for good behaviour within the school premises.

Parents/guardians can support the school by encouraging their children to understand the need for school rules, and by communicating any relevant concerns to the school.

### **The code of behaviour details:**

1. The standards of behaviour that shall be observed by each pupil attending the school;
2. The whole school approach to promoting positive behaviour;
3. The measures that shall be taken when a pupil fails or refuses to observe these standards;
4. The procedures to be followed before a pupil may be suspended or expelled from the school concerned;
5. The grounds for removing a suspension imposed in relation to a pupil;
6. The school's Anti-Bullying Policy; and
7. The procedures to be followed in relation to a child's absence from school.

### **Policy Formation**

In formulating this policy the Board of Management completed the following steps:

1. Parents were informed that an initial draft of the Code of Behaviour was available and they were invited to make submissions on the content of the code within a specified timeframe.
2. Class teachers were requested to discuss the topic of rules with their classes and submit a list of pupils' suggestions to the principal.
3. The initial draft of the Code of Behaviour was reviewed and where appropriate amended in-line with the feedback received.

4. The finalised draft of the policy was submitted for the Patron's approval.

### **Aims and Objectives of the code**

- To allow the school to function in an orderly way where children can make progress in all aspects of their development.
- To create an atmosphere of respect, tolerance and consideration for others.
- To promote positive behaviour and self-discipline, recognising the differences between children and the need to accommodate these differences.
- To ensure the safety and well-being of all members of the school community.
- To assist school staff, parents and pupils in understanding the systems and procedures that form part of the code of behaviour and to seek their co-operation in the application of these procedures.
- To ensure that the system of rules, rewards and sanctions are implemented in a fair and consistent manner throughout the school.
- To encourage consistency of response to both positive and negative behaviour
- To facilitate the education and development of every child
- To foster caring attitudes to one another and to the environment
- To enable teachers to teach without disruption

### **Responsibility of Adults**

The adults encountered by the children at school have an important responsibility to model high standards of behaviour, both in their dealings with the children and with each other, as their example has an important influence on the children.

As adults we should aim to:

- Create a positive climate with realistic expectations.
- Promote positive behaviour, through example, honesty and courtesy.
- Provide a caring and effective learning environment.
- Encourage relationships based on kindness, respect and understanding of the needs of others.
- Ensure fair treatment for all regardless of age, gender, race, ability and disability.
- Show appreciation of the efforts and contribution of all.
- To discourage physical aggression and encourage *'Kind Hands, Kind Words, Kind Feet'*.

A Code of Conduct for staff, pupils and volunteers ensures that the rights of all are upheld.

### **Whole School Approach**

The Board of Management recognises the importance of creating consistent values, policies, practices and relationships that support the Code of Behaviour. Such an environment may only be formed by involving the entire school community and in this respect the Board acknowledges the importance of the roles played by, the principal, teachers, ancillary staff and parents in the review and operation of the code.

## **Standards of Behaviour**

### **Pupils**

#### **General Behaviour**

Each pupil is expected to:

- be well behaved and show consideration for other children and adults.
- Show respect for the property of, the school, other children and their own belongings, having their own belongings labelled including coats, sweaters, tracksuit tops and indoor shoes.
- Attend school on a regular basis and be punctual.
- Do his/her best both in school and for homework.
- Observe usual courtesies eg. Please, thank you, excuse me etc.
- Walk on the left side of school corridors in a quiet, orderly fashion.
- To address all staff courteously using correct term of address eg. Mrs Jones, Mr. Smith, Teacher etc
- Wear correct school uniform-no jewellery (apart from a watch and single stud earrings worn on both ears)
- Respect healthy eating and anti-litter policy
- Obey school rules with regard to mobile phones-no mobile phones to be brought to school (unless in exceptional circumstances, see mobile phone policy)

#### **Classroom behaviour**

Each pupil is expected to:

- Obey classroom rules
- Listen-to the class teacher and other pupils if they are speaking
- Work-to the best of his/her ability
- Value-school property and the belongings of fellow pupils
- Follow-the direction of his/her teacher
- Obtain-his/her teachers permission to leave the classroom
- Sign out in office if leaving school for medical or dental appointments or any other reason
- Respect rosters for use of electronic devices.
- Keep classroom reasonably tidy by replacing books, games etc in the appropriate storage area.

#### **Playground (Playing pitches) Behaviour**

Each pupil is expected to:

- Play-safely avoiding any games or play that is rough or dangerous
- Follow-the directions of the playground supervisors
- Remain-on school grounds at all times
- Obtain-permission before re-entering the school building during break periods

- Respect-the yard supervisor(s) and fellow pupils
- Avoid-swearing, fighting or name calling
- Play within designated areas
- Follow roster for playground activities
- Obey any sanctions imposed in playground for breach of playground rules.
- Line up with class group quietly and in an orderly manner when bell rings.
- Line up with class group quietly and in an orderly manner when lining up before school begins.

### **Behaviour in other School Areas and on School Trips**

Each pupil is expected to:

- Follow-his/her teacher's directions at all times
- Remain-with the teacher/supervisors and group of pupils at all times
- Behave-politely towards those they meet
- Observe-the rules of general good behaviour so that the safety of all concerned is maintained
- Follow the School 'Code of Discipline' and other relevant school policies i.e. 'Mobile Phone and Electronic Devices' Policy
- Respect and obey the coach at hurling, camogie, swimming etc.

### **Staff**

It is the Principal's responsibility to ensure the school's Code of Behaviour is administered in a manner that is consistent and fair to all pupils. However, each staff member has responsibility for the maintenance of discipline within common areas of the school.

Teaching staff are responsible for the management of behaviour within their own class.

They will:

- Discuss the code of behaviour with their class in an age appropriate manner at the beginning of the school year.
- Ensure the rules are displayed in the classroom.
- Encourage self-discipline and positive behaviour.
- Ensure there is an appropriate level of supervision at all times.
- Implement the reward/sanction scheme in a fair and consistent manner.
- Keep a written record of all incidents of continued, serious or gross misconduct. This record will indicate the advice and/or warnings given to the child on the misbehaviour and, the consequences of its repetition.
- Inform pupils when incidences of misbehaviour on their part are being recorded.
- Report repeated incidences of serious misbehaviour to the Principal.

### **Parents/Guardians**

Parents/Guardians play a crucial role in shaping attitudes in their children which produce positive behaviour in school. Parents/Guardians can assist the school by encouraging their children to abide by the school rules, encouraging punctuality and regular attendance and by ensuring that homework is given due time and effort.

Should a parent/guardian be concerned about any aspect of their child's behaviour they are welcome to make an appointment to discuss their concerns. Parents are requested to follow the school complaints procedure, if warranted and arrange a meeting with the class teacher first through the school office.

In cases of an identified pattern of behaviour parents will be invited to participate in the intervention process.

### **Promoting Positive Behaviour**

As a general rule the school will endeavour to create an environment where positive behaviour is reinforced through praise and reward. School staff will use encouraging language and gestures, both in class and around the school, so that positive behaviour is instantly recognised and positively rewarded. Special attention will be paid to pupils who have previously been associated with poor behaviour so that not only good behaviour but also improvement in behaviour is acknowledged.

Children will be encouraged to take part in sport and games, skipping and board games on wet days as a means to promote good behaviour.

A reward scheme for promoting positive behaviour will be used. Such rewards will include;

- Dojo point system
- Extra playtime
- Homework passes
- Award stickers and stamps.
- Award certificates (pupil of the week)
- Trophy (pupil of the month)
- Prizes for 'random acts of kindness'
- Class treat-eg. Dvd

### **Inappropriate Behaviour**

In order to establish a common understanding and consistent response the Code of Behaviour classifies misbehaviour into three levels based on the degree of disruption caused by the misconduct. The Code also specifies the disciplinary actions and supportive interventions that will be employed.

#### **Level One**

##### **Level 1: Behaviours**

Level 1 behaviours are those that interfere with the orderly learning environment of the school, classroom and common areas. Students learn from their mistakes. To this extent, responses to the daily behaviours, which occur in school will be developmentally appropriate, instructive and positive. Children will be taught what is expected and how they should behave. Listed below are some examples of the types of behaviour that are included in Level 1. Please note that the list is not exhaustive.

- Failure to prepare for class, as defined by individual teachers eg. Homework not done or done badly.
- Failure to line up in an orderly, quiet manner in the morning time and at school breaks.
- Running or shouting in the hallways.
- Disturbing the work or play of others.
- Disrespectful language, tone or manner.
- Ignoring staff requests
- Leaving designated areas in playgrounds without permission.

## **Level 1: Disciplinary Actions**

Consequences for Level 1 behaviour are dependent upon the severity and frequency of the specific behaviour. Teachers will discipline students at Level 1. Some examples of Level 1 responses are:

- Verbal reprimand/reminder(s)
- Reinforcement of alternative positive behaviour
- Temporary separation from peers, friends or others
- Prescribing additional work
- Supervised detention
- Loss of privileges
- Parent contact (eg note in diary, phone call )
- Behaviour contract
- School playground-time spent on the bench

## **Level 1: Supportive Interventions**

Listed below are some examples of Level 1 supportive actions:

- Classroom-based interventions, such as circle time, role play or class meetings, with the option of informal consultation (eg. with parent(s), guardian(s) or staff members).
- Discussion of behaviour with the child.
- Informal notes regarding incident/intervention/date. This information would be useful should a problem persist.

## **Level Two**

### **Level 2: Behaviours**

Level 2 behaviours are those that seriously interfere with the orderly environment of the school and are potentially dangerous to the safety and wellbeing of the students and staff. Listed below are some of the examples of behaviour that are included in Level 2. Please note that the list is not exhaustive.

- Repeated incidences of level 1 behaviour which have not been modified by intervention and as deemed by school management/school principal.
- Behaviour that is dangerous to others (eg. shoving, pushing, hitting, spitting)
- Behaviour which results in emotional distress (eg. name calling, inappropriate use of photographs and/or comments on social media)
- Intentionally damaging school or personal property.
- Stealing
- Smoking of tobacco products including e cigarettes, drinking of alcohol or substance misuse
- Cheating
- Use of profanity

- Derogatory reference to another person's race, gender, religion, physical condition, disability or ethnic origin.
- Disrespectful language or behaviour toward an adult.
- Possession or use of dangerous items/toys or sporting equipment (e.g. lighters/matches, any kinds of knives, weapons etc)
- Breach of school policy in other areas (e.g. mobile phone and electronic devices policy).

## **Level 2: Disciplinary Actions**

The disciplining of students for Level 2 behaviour is dependent upon the severity and frequency of the specific behaviour and developmentally appropriate levels. The disciplinary actions at Level 2 are administered by the principal, and include the formal notification of the parents with written documentation. Some examples of Level 2 responses are:

- In school supervised detention
- Report submitted to the Board of Management.
- Meeting with parent(s)/guardian(s)
- Suspension from school of one to five days, depending on the severity of the behaviour.
- Implementation of extensive behaviour management plan.

## **Level 2: Supportive Interventions**

Listed below are some examples of Level 2 supportive actions:

- Team conference to include classroom teacher, other involved staff, Deputy Principal/Principal
- Request for assistance from external agencies such as the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS), Health Service Executive Community Services, the National Behavioural Support Service, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, National Council for Special Education (NCSE).
- Referral of a child displaying behavioural problems for psychological intervention/assessment (with the parent(s), guardians(s) consent).

## **Level Three**

### **Level 3: Behaviours**

Level 3 behaviours are considered the most serious violations. These behaviours endanger the immediate health, safety and personal well-being of the pupils and the staff of the school. They represent a direct threat to the orderly operation of the school environment. Situations, which include illegal activity, may result in contact with the Garda Síochána after parental involvement. Listed below are some examples of the types of behaviour that are included in Level 3. Please note that the list is not exhaustive.

- Repeated or serious instances of Level 2 behaviour which have not been modified by intervention and as deemed by school management/school principal.
- Setting fires
- Intentional possession or use of weapons
- Violent fighting or intentionally causing physical harm to others.
- Discriminatory or prejudicial activities or actions towards another person or group involving race, gender, religion, physical condition, handicap or ethnic origin.

### **Level 3: Disciplinary Actions**

Behaviour at level 3 may involve suspension from school. The length of the suspension will depend on the severity and frequency of the specific behaviour. Specific documentation about due process and procedures in respect of the issuing of a suspension is contained in this document.

### **Level 3: Responses**

- Suspension from school for one to five days:

This response will occur with the first incident of level 3 behaviour or level 2 behaviour of significant severity. The principal following due process and procedure, can issue a suspension.

- Suspension from school for five to ten days:

This response will occur with the repeated incident of Level 3 behaviour or a severe expression of this behaviour. A suspension of this magnitude can only be issued with the approval of the Board of Management.

- Expulsion

Repeated incidents of Level 3 behaviour can result in a pupil being expelled.

### **Procedures for Suspensions and Expulsions**

#### **Suspension**

Definition of Suspension:

‘requiring the student to absent himself/herself from the school for a specified, limited period of school days’.

Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB).

#### **Authority to Suspend:**

The Board of Management of Scoil Áine Naofa, Loch Cútra has formally and in writing delegated the authority to impose an immediate suspension to the Principal Teacher. An ‘immediate suspension’ may be for a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the specific behaviour. In exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board the suspension may be for a longer period but in any event will not exceed 5 school days.

Furthermore, the Board of Management has formally and in writing delegated to the Principal Teacher the authority to impose an ‘automatic suspension’ for named behaviours detailed in this policy. An ‘automatic suspension’ may be for a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the specific behaviour. In exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board the suspension may be for a longer period but in any event will not exceed 5 school days.

The Board retains its authority to suspend a student in all other cases/circumstances.

#### **Immediate Suspension and Automatic Suspension**

An ‘Immediate Suspension’ will be deemed to be necessary where after a preliminary investigation, the Principal reaches the determination that the continued presence of the pupil in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety and wellbeing of pupils or staff of the school. An ‘immediate suspension’ may be for a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the specific behaviour. In exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board the suspension may be for a longer period but in any event will not exceed 5 school days.

An ‘automatic suspension’ is a suspension imposed for named behaviours. The Board of Management of Scoil Áine Naofa, having given due consideration to its duty of care as prescribed by health and safety



legislation, has determined that the following named behaviours will incur 'Automatic Suspension' as a sanction;

- Physical assault/violence resulting in bodily harm to a pupil or a member of staff.

Or

- Physical violence resulting in serious damage to school property.

An 'Automatic Suspension' may be for a period of one to three school days depending on the severity of the named behaviour. In exceptional circumstances and with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board the suspension may be for a longer period but in any event will not exceed 5 school days.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be informed of an immediate or automatic suspension by telephone, and arrangements will be made with them for the pupil to be collected. In no circumstance will a student be sent home from school prior to his/her parent(s), guardian(s) being notified. Formal written notification of the suspension will issue in due course, but no later than 2 school days after the imposition of the suspension. Such a notification will detail:

- the duration of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end.
- The reasons for the suspension
- Any study programme to be followed.
- The arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the pupil and the parent(s)/guardian(s).

The Board of Management acknowledges the decision to impose an immediate or automatic suspension does not remove the duty to follow due process and fair procedures. In this regard, and following a formal investigation, to be completed no later than 2 school days after the incident the Board will invite the pupil and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) to a meeting to discuss;

- The circumstances surrounding the suspension
- Interventions to prevent a reoccurrence of such misconduct.

The Board of Management of Scoil Áine Naofa acknowledges the fundamental importance of impartiality in the investigation process. In this regard the following undertaking is given;

No person with a vested interest or personal involvement in the matter will be involved in the organisation or implementation of the investigation procedure.

### **Procedures in respect of other suspensions**

In cases other than those of 'Immediate or Automatic Suspension' the following procedures will apply

Where a preliminary assessment of the fact confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant suspension, the Board of Management of Scoil Áine Naofa will initiate a formal investigation of the matter.

The following procedures will be observed;

A written letter containing the following information will issue to Parent(s)/guardian(s);

- Details of the alleged misbehaviour, details of the impending investigation process, and notification that the allegation could result in suspension.
- An invitation to a meeting, to be scheduled no later than 5 school days from the date of the letter, where parent(s)/guardian(s) are provided with an opportunity to respond before a decision is made or a sanction is imposed.

The Board of Management of Scoil Áine Naofa acknowledges the fundamental importance of impartiality in the investigation and decision making process. In this regard the following undertakings are given;

- No teacher with a vested interest or personal involvement in the matter will be involved in the organisation or implementation of the investigation procedure, nor will such a person be involved in the decision making process.
- The person(s) involved in the investigation process will on presentation of a full report of the facts absent himself/herself/themselves from the decision making process.

Where a decision to suspend has been made the Chairperson of the Board of Management will provide written notification to the parent(s)/teacher(s) and the pupil of the decision. The letter will confirm:

- The duration of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will be begin and end.
- The reasons for the suspension
- Any study programme to be followed
- The arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the pupil and the parent(s)/guardian(s).
- The provision for an appeal to the Board of Management.

When a suspension brings the total number of days for which the pupil has been suspended in the current school year to twenty days the parent(s)/guardians will be informed of their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills under Section 29 of the 1998 Education Act and will be provided with information on the submission of such an appeal.

## **Expulsion**

### **Definition of Expulsion:**

‘A student is expelled from a school when a Board of Management makes a decision to permanently exclude him or her from the school having complied with the provisions of section 24 of the ‘Education (Welfare) Act 2000’.

Developing a Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for Schools, National Education Board

### **Authority to Expel**

The authority to expel a pupil is reserved by the Board of Management.

### **Procedures in respect of Expulsion**

Where a preliminary assessment of the facts confirms serious misbehaviour that could warrant expulsion the following procedures will apply:

- (a) A detailed investigation will be carried out under the direction of the Principal (or a nominee of the Board if required).

As part of the investigation a written letter containing the following information will issue to parent(s), guardian(s);

- Details of the alleged misbehaviour, details of the impending investigation process, and notification that the allegation could result in expulsion.
- An invitation to a meeting, to be scheduled no later than 5 school days from the date of the letter, where parent(s)/guardian(s) are provided with an opportunity to respond.

- (b) The Principal (or BOM nominee) will make a recommendation to the Board of Management.

Where the Principal (or BOM nominee) forms a view, based on the investigation of the alleged misbehaviour, that expulsion may be warranted, the Principal (or nominee) makes a recommendation to the Board of Management to consider expulsion.

In this event the Principal (or nominee) will:

- inform the parent(s)/guardian(s) that the Board of Management has been asked to consider expulsion.

- ensure that parent(s)/guardian(s) have records of: the allegations against the student; the investigation; and written notice on the grounds on which the Board of Management is being asked to consider expulsion.
  - provide the Board of Management with the same comprehensive records as are given to parent(s)/guardian(s).
- (c) Consideration by the Board of Management of the Principal's (or BOM's Nominee) recommendations and the holding of a hearing.

If, having considered the Principal's report, the Board of Management decides to consider expelling a student a hearing will be scheduled.

The parent(s), guardian(s) will be notified in writing.

- (i) As to the date, location and time of the hearing.
- (ii) Of their right to make a written and oral submission to the Board of Management.
- (iii) That they may if they so choose be accompanied at the hearing.

The Board of Management undertakes that the timing of such written notification will ensure that parent(s)/guardian(s) have enough notice to allow them to prepare for the hearing.

In respect of the expulsion hearing, the Board gives an undertaking that;

- (i) The meeting will be properly conducted in accordance with the Board procedures.
- (ii) The principal (or BOM nominee) and parent(s)/guardian(s) will present their case to the Board in each other's presence.
- (iii) Each party will be given the opportunity to directly question the evidence of the other party.
- (iv) The parent(s)/guardian(s) may make a case for the lesser sanction if they so choose.
- (d) Board of Management Deliberations and Actions following the hearing.

Where the Board of Management, having considered all the facts of the case, is of the opinion that the pupil should be expelled the Board

- (i) Will notify the Education Welfare Officer in writing by registered post of its opinion, and the reasons for this opinion.
- (ii) Will not expel the student before the passage of 20 days from the date on which the Educational Welfare Officer receives this written notification.
- (iii) Will in writing notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their decision and inform them that the Education Welfare Officer is being contacted.
- (iv) Will be represented at the consultation to be organised by the Education Welfare Officer.
- (v) Will suspend the student if it is deemed likely that the continued presence of the student during this time will seriously disrupt the learning of others, or represent a threat to the safety of other pupils and staff.

(e) Confirmation of the decision to Expel.

Where the twenty-day period following notification to the Education Welfare Officer has elapsed, and where the Board of Management remains of the view that the student should be expelled, the Board of Management will formally confirm the decision to expel.

Parent (s)/guardian (s) will be notified in writing that the expulsion will now proceed. They will also be informed of their right to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Science under Section 29 of the Education Act 1998 and will be provided with information on the submission of such an appeal.

The Board of Management of Scoil Áine Naofa, Loch Cútra acknowledges the fundamental importance of impartiality in the investigation and decision making process. In this regard the following undertakings are given;

- (i) No person with a vested interest or personal involvement in the matter will be involved in the organisation or implementation of the investigation procedure, nor will such a person be involved in the decision making process.
- (ii) The person(s) involved in the investigation will on presentation of a full report of the facts absent himself/herself/themselves from the decision making process.

### **Notification of a Child's Absence from School**

Parents (s)/guardian (s) should adhere to the following procedures when notifying the school of a pupil's absence:

- The school should be notified of the absence on the first day the pupil returns to school.
- The reason for the absence should be notified to the class teacher.
- The absence should be notified in writing by letter/using the school journal.
- Details pertaining to the absence, such as duration and reason should be provided.
- Significant absences caused by ill health (i.e. absences longer than 10 school days) should be certified.

The school will inform the Education Welfare Officer in writing where a child is suspended or expelled for 6 days or more, where the child has missed 20 or more days in a school year, where attendance is irregular and when the pupil is removed from the school register. The school is also under obligation to notify TUSLA when a child has missed 20 or more days in a school year.

### **Records**

A standardised record system will be used to track an individual pupil's behaviour. This will be stored in a locked cabinet in the child's file in the principal's office. Such records will contain:

- Incidents of misbehaviour
- Interventions used to improve behaviour, including contact with parent(s)/guardian(s) or other agencies (e.g. NEPS Psychologist).
- Evidence of improved behaviour
- Any sanctions imposed and the reasons they were imposed.

Pupils will be told when a record is being made about their behaviour and the reasons for keeping a record will be explained.

### **Policy Ratification**

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Scoil Áine Naofa, Loch Cútra.

Signed\_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_

(Chairperson, BOM)

Signed\_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_

(Principal)

### **Patron's Approval**

This policy has been approved by PJ Callanan, of the Galway Diocese acting on behalf of the Patron, the Bishop of Galway.



## **Scoil Áine Naofa,** **Loch Cútra** **Anti-Bullying Policy**

1. 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 (BOM) of Scoil Áine Naofa, Loch Cútra has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour. The policy fully complies with the requirements of the Anti-bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools which were published in September 2013

2. The BOM 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 in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

- 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; and
  - c) promotes respectful relationships across the whole school community
- 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, investigating and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
- Ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti- bullying policy

**3. Definition of Bullying:** In accordance with the Anti-bullying Procedures for Primary and Post -Primary Schools bullying is defined as: **unwanted negative/inappropriate behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted, by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.**

**The following are some of the types of bullying behaviour that can occur amongst pupils (please note this list is not exhaustive)**

- **Physical aggression:** This behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While pupils often engage in ‘mess fights’, they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.
- **Intimidation:** Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation: it may be based on the use of very aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon. Particularly upsetting can be a facial expression which conveys aggression and/or dislike.
- **Isolation/exclusion and other relational bullying:** This occurs where a certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or all of the class group. This practice is usually initiated by the person engaged in bullying behaviour and can be difficult to detect. It may be accompanied by writing insulting remarks about the pupil in public places, by passing around notes about or drawings of the pupil or by whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard. Relational bullying occurs when a person’s attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. One of the most common forms include control: ‘Do this or I won’t be your friend anymore’ (implied or stated); a group ganging up against one person (girl or boy); non-verbal gesturing; malicious gossiping; spreading rumours about a person or giving them the silent treatment, repeated unreasonable tasks, when collecting copies/books repeatedly putting one child’s books to the bottom of the pile.
- **Cyberbullying:** 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 (facebook, snapchat, twitter, instagram among others), email, instant messaging (through facebook among others), apps, gaming sites, chat-rooms and other online technologies. Being the target of inappropriate and/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 messages or pictures may be posted with negative comments about a person’s sexuality, appearance etc.
- **Name calling/Verbal abuse (anonymous or otherwise)/aggressive or obscene language:** Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual which hurts, insults or humiliates should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often, name-calling of this type refers to physical appearance, eg. 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.
- **Identity based bullying:** identity based bullying such as homophobic or transphobic bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the travelling community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs
- **Damage to property:** Personal property can be the focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, school books or other learning materials, mobile phones or other

devices, personal items or interference with a pupil's school bag, pencil case, lunch box, sports gear, bicycle among other items. The contents of school bags or pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.

- **Extortion:** Demands for money or other items 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 for another who is engaged in bullying behaviour.

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 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** (eg. facebook, instagram, twitter, snapchat among others) 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.

4. The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are the class teachers however other teachers including Learning Support and Resource Teachers may assist. The Principal will be informed where bullying behaviour is suspected and is being investigated.

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) will be as follows:

- **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. Victims should be reassured that if they tell, something will be done about the bullying in a safe manner and all reported incidents will be dealt with.
- b) Class lessons to be provided to enable pupils "how to tell" (telling protocol)
- c) 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.

### **Raising the awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour –**

- a) The school aims to prevent bullying by raising awareness through the SPHE curriculum which is taught at each class level. Programmes such as the revised Walk Tall, RSE, Stay Safe and Webwise will instil empathy, respect and resilience in pupils.

- b) In the teaching of all subjects, teachers aim to foster an attitude of respect for all, to promote diversity, to address prejudice and stereotypes and to highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour

- **Building Self-Esteem**

- a) The school will endeavour to enhance the self-esteem of all pupils through specific lessons across all class levels.
- b) Opportunities for team building exercises will be encouraged at an age appropriate level.
- c) Many opportunities to reinforce positive behaviour arise daily which also enhances self-esteem.

- **Whole School Approach**

- a) Each staff member will be made aware of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy. It will be discussed and reviewed at least once every year at staff meetings.
- b) Professional development in the area of anti- bullying will be encouraged.
- c) Parents will receive a copy of this policy on their child's enrolment. Parents will be encouraged to inform the school of any concerns that may arise.  
This policy will be published on the school's website.
- d) Anti-bullying will be on the agenda for every Board of Management meeting. This policy will be discussed and reviewed annually by the Board of Management.

- **Safe Internet Use**

- a) The school has an Acceptable Use Policy which deals with safe internet use. Parents receive a copy of this policy on their child's enrolment.  
Teachers will regularly discuss and review this policy at staff meetings.
- b) The school has a web filter operating which controls the online content available.
- c) Children will be taught appropriate online behaviour.
- d) Specific lessons will focus on skills needed for using the internet such as: effective and safe searching, downloading images and determining what online content can be trusted, communicating online or by text message at an age-appropriate level.
- e) Issues such as the sharing of personal information online, the treating of others with respect, cyber bullying, responding to digital media and dealing with spam will be covered at an age-appropriate level.

- **Children with Special Needs**

- a) Teachers will endeavour to create an atmosphere of inclusion for all pupils with disabilities or with SEN.
- b) Approaches to decreasing the likelihood of bullying for pupils with SEN or for pupils with SEN engaged in bullying behaviour will focus on developing understanding and social skills, paying attention to key moments such as transitioning from primary to post-primary and cultivating a good school culture which has respect for all. Our school has a very fine tradition in this area as is



demonstrated by our special class for children with autism.

### **Other strategies**

- Positive reinforcement by teachers in classroom setting (e.g. Class dojo, Students of the week, Students of the month, Golden time, prizes for 'random acts of kindness', stars, stickers etc.)
- Modelling of respectful behaviour and language by teachers and staff.
- Promotion of extra-curricular activities which encourage co-operation among pupils (to extend this beyond sport).
- Rewarding incidents of good and improved behaviour and showing acts of kindness at class level and whole-school-'random acts of kindness' book.
- Encouraging students to look out for each other and to be responsible for their own behaviour.
- All teachers are required to be vigilant on yard duty- record all incidences- monitor repeat offenders
- Immediate affirmation of children who report incidents of bullying which they have witnessed.
- Circle-time sessions, role-play, Socially Speaking programs and puppetry are methodologies which are used to discuss and explore issues of bullying.
- To prepare a "quiet room" (Library area) for circle time and other programmes.
- Each class to have a set of class rules which compliment the school's Code of Behaviour
- Ensure supervision at all times when pupils can access the internet.
- Teacher's face-book accounts should be private
- Sanctions for unauthorised use of the internet/electronic devices will be imposed as per the Code of Behaviour, Mobile Phone Policy and Acceptable Use Policy.
- All teachers to be familiar on internet safety
- To focus on the topic of bullying on at least one school assembly (Nov. of each school year) as per the recommendations from Dealing with Bullying in Schools (Office of the Ombudsman for Children 2013).

The school's procedure for investigation, follow up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying are as follows:

Incidents of Bullying will be dealt with on a staged basis.

### **Stage 1**

All reports of bullying must be dealt with initially by the class teacher.

- When a pupil tells a teacher s/he is being bullied, it is important to gather all of the facts from both sides (What, where, when, who, why?). This will involve an interview with the pupil/group of pupils alleged to have engaged in bullying behaviour. If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all involved will be met as a group. Sometimes there is a need for members of groups to be re-interviewed.
- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best to resolve the situation. (Principal to be made aware when a teacher is investigating a report).
- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil/group of pupils have been involved in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her/them that he/she/they are in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try and see the from the perspective of the pupil/pupils being bullied.

- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher 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 (by reference to the school policy). 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 the pupils.
- The aim for the class teacher 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).
- Non-teaching staff will be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them to the relevant teacher.
- The Teacher should take calm, unemotional, problem-solving approach.
- All sides are listened to separately and notes are taken.
- The notes are brief, factual and should be void of emotional, or judgemental language.
- Instances are investigated outside the classroom where possible to avoid public humiliations.
- All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regards to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way. (See Anti bullying Procedures for Primary and Post -Primary Schools 6.8.9 page 30-31) for further suggestions.
- Where possible, a witness is present.
- It is explained to the pupil alleged to have engaged in bullying behaviour how hurtful their behaviour is and attempts are made to encourage them to empathise with the alleged victim.
- 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 must be recorded by the relevant teacher in the recording template at Appendix 2.

## **Stage 2**

If this child breaks promise and re-offends then the Principal or Deputy Principal with the class teacher will interview the child/children again. It is explained to them that this is their second time offending and that they have not committed to their promise. Again attempts will be made to resolve the situation. They are now advised that if they break this promise again, they will have a meeting with the principal and their parents in the office and could face suspension.

- Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigations 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.
- Information spoken about should not become available, so that the victim would be further tormented. (Needs to know basis)

## **Stage 3**

If a child breaks their promise twice then the matter is referred to the Principal. The Principal meets with the child and the parent and the child may be suspended for up to 3 days. The Principal has the permission of the

Board of Management to suspend for up to 3 school days and permission to suspend for up to 5 school days with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board.

### **Recording of incidents:**

All incidents will be logged by class teacher and incidents which have not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days will be recorded by the class teacher on the recording template as in Appendix 2 (Anti bullying Procedures for Primary and Post -Primary Schools). This template will be completed in full and a copy given to the Deputy Principal and Principal. At least once every school term the Principal will provide a report to the BOM setting out the overall number of bullying cases reported (if any), as part of the 'Principal's Child Protection Oversight Report' if there are child protection concerns arising from bullying behaviour among pupils and if the need arises confirm that all cases are being dealt with in accordance with procedure.

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

### **Pupils who are victims of bullying**

1. Victims of bullying are reassured from the outset that they are not to blame.
2. Strategies for restoring self-esteem are explored between teacher and parents/guardians.
3. Where deemed necessary, the child in consultation with parents may be referred for counselling.
4. Staged approach- class support, school support (as per Continuum -Behavioural, Emotional and Social difficulties- involvement of NEPS Psychologist).
5. Victims may be chosen for Drama Therapy sessions or as part of a group for the Talkabout Social Skills Programme.

### **Pupils engaged in bullying behaviour**

1. Where deemed necessary, the child in consultation with parents may be referred for counselling.
  2. They may need to learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.
  3. Empathy awareness needs to be developed. Pupils engaged in bullying behaviour may be chosen for Drama Therapy sessions and personal development groups as part of the Talkabout Social Skills Programme.
  4. Staged approach - class support, school support (as per Continuum-Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties- NEPS)
  5. Clinical referral and interventions/assessment may be necessary (NEPS psychologist etc)
- 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. The school's policy could be given to those who are closely involved at this stage (e.g. school bus) so that if bullying behaviour is witnessed by them, that they may report it to the school.
  - In certain cases too it may be necessary to invite assistance from formal agencies such as Gardai, HSE, Local Youth Groups etc.
  - 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. We also direct their attention to the school's internet Acceptable Use Policy (AUP).

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.

## **8. Supervision and Monitoring of pupils**

The BOM 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. Prevention of Harassment**

The BOM confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps that are reasonably practical 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 Travelling community.

## **10. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the policy**

The evaluation of the policy will happen on both an informal (through teacher observation) and formal basis (use of surveys and questionnaires). Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent will be referred, as appropriate to the school complaints procedure.

### **Success Criteria:**

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

**11.** This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 04/12/2019

**12.** This policy has been made available to school personnel and published on the school website. A copy of the policy will be made available to the Department and patron if requested.

**13.** This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the BOM once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel and to parents on request. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and to the Department.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

(Chairperson of the Board of Management)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

(Principal)

Date:

Date:

The following appendices are from the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools.

### **Appendix 1 Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate**

The following are some practical tips for immediate actions that can be taken to help build a positive school culture and climate and to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour.

- Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.
- Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.
- Catch them being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN.
- Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.
- 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. Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas, changing rooms, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision. 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 Template for recording bullying behaviour

### 1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Class \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour


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

Pupil concerned	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other (please specify)	

### 4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))\*

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other	

### 5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern

--

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

Physical Aggression		Cyber-bullying	
Damage to Property		Intimidation	
Isolation/Exclusion		Malicious Gossip	
Name Calling		Other (specify)	

### 7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)

**8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact**

**9. Details of actions taken**

Signed \_\_\_\_\_(Relevant Teacher) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal \_\_\_\_\_

### Appendix 3

#### Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation. The following checklist must be used for this purpose. The checklist is an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. In order to complete the checklist, an examination and review involving both quantitative and qualitative analysis, as appropriate across the various elements of the implementation of the school's anti-bullying policy will be required.

Yes /No

Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools</i> ?	
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	
Is the Board satisfied that school staff are sufficiently familiar with the policy and procedures to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy and procedures in their day to day work?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	
Has the Board discussed how well the school is handling all reports of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and not therefore included in the Principal's periodic report to the Board?	
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction	



with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	
Have any Ombudsman for Children, investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	
Has the data available from cases reported to the Principal (by the bullying recording template) been analysed to identify any issues, trends or patterns in bullying behaviour?	
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Principal

