



**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. The more recent Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying (2022) and Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2019 were also consulted.

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.**

Furthermore, the 2022, Cineáltas report states bullying is: **Targeted behaviour, online or offline, that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society**

**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).

• Promotion of → FUSE Programme, Wellness week, Anti Bullying week

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 a support programme as recommended by the NEPs psychologist.

#### **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 discussion sessions and personal development groups as part of the Talkabout Social Skills Programme or the 'Self Esteem' programme used throughout the school.
  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 and re-ratified upon changes in 2023.a

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: David Fane  
(Chairperson of the Board of Management)

Signed: Amy Mulkerrens  
(Principal)

Date: 22/3/2023

Date: 22/3/2023



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**

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**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)	
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**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> ?	y
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	y
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	y
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?	y
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	y
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	y
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	y
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	y
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	y
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	y
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	NA

Principal's periodic report to the Board?	Y
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	N/A
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	N
Have any Ombudsman for Children, investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	N
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?	N/A
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	N
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	N

Signed David Jones  
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date 22/3/2023

Signed Amy Mulkerriws  
Principal

Date 22/3/2023

