

**Scoil Phádraig**

**Anti-Bullying**

**Policy**

## Anti-Bullying Policy

- 1: In accordance with the requirements of the [Education \(Welfare\) Act, 2000](#) and the [Code of Behaviour: Guidelines for School](#) issued by the NEWB, the Board of Management of **Scoil Phádraig** 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.
  
- 2: 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 welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
    - encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment.
    - promotes respectful relationships across the 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, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
  - On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

### Relationship to Characteristic spirit of the school

The Ethos of Scoil Phádraig aims to create and maintain a happy atmosphere, built on good spirit on the part of pupils, staff, parents and the Board of Management. All involved in Scoil Phádraig seek to create, develop, and maintain an environment that is **Safe, Happy, Welcoming** and **Inclusive** for all. We strive to build healthy, mutually-respectful relationships. Within this environment, we desire a sense of good order and an agreed approach to discipline. Building the self-esteem of each individual is central to all our teaching, learning and daily interactions. We see education as the development of the whole person in a caring, supportive and safe environment. Our everyday, lived experiences are based on the Christian principles of Peace, Honesty and Respect. Bullying behaviour is contrary to our ethos and beliefs as it can undermine personal growth and educational achievement and it has an adverse effect on the victim, the bully and their peers.

It is important therefore that Scoil Phádraig has a clear written policy to promote this belief, so that pupils and parents/guardians are fully aware that bullying complaints will be dealt with promptly, fairly and consistently. Our Anti-Bullying Policy will be closely linked to our Code of Behaviour. Awareness of bullying issues will be highlighted at regular intervals for the pupils, during SPHE lessons.

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

### **The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:**

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
- cyber-bullying and
- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

**Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour 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.

Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in [Sections 2](#) of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

**All staff members have a Responsibility not to instigate, condone or ignore bullying behaviour.**

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

**Roles and Responsibilities**

All Staff members have the responsibility to

- (a) acquaint themselves with the content of this policy.
- (b) co-ordinate and monitor the implementation of the policy.

The Principal will have overall responsibility for the co-ordination and implementation of this policy.

Parents and Pupils are asked to support the school at all times in our efforts to deal with bullying.

**5: The education and prevention strategies that will be used by the school are as follows:**

**Strategies for prevention of Bullying**

“At the centre of a whole school response to bullying is the creation of a positive school climate which focuses on respect for the individual.” (Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour in Primary and Post- Primary Schools, 1993). It is important that pupils are encouraged to report incidents of bullying. This may require a change in attitudes so that pupils realise that they have a responsibility for the safety and welfare of other pupils. We need to stress the need to prevent bullying and not just control it.

**The school fosters a positive ethos among pupils, staff and parents.**

There is a strong sense of community and co-operation between Board of Management, Staff, Pupils and Parents, and each has a clear role in the prevention of bullying, e.g.

- Through a programme of positive action, the school promotes an atmosphere of friendship, respect and tolerance.
- The S.P.H.E. curriculum, including the “Stay Safe” programme, is used throughout the school to support the Anti-Bullying policy.
- Positive self-esteem is fostered among the pupils by celebrating individual differences/achievements, by acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour and by providing opportunities for success.
- Pupils are helped to develop empathy by discussing feelings and by trying to put themselves in the place of others.
- Teachers will respond sensitively to pupils who disclose incidents of bullying.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed regularly with the pupils and staff.
- Staff are particularly vigilant in monitoring pupils who are considered at risk of bullying/being bullied.
- All disclosed incidents of bullying are investigated.
- Members of the Board of Management are familiar with the school's policy on bullying and actively promote it on a repeated basis among staff, parents and pupils.
- Parents contribute to and support the school's policy on bullying by encouraging positive behaviour both at home and at school, by being vigilant for signs and symptoms that their child is being bullied or is bullying others, and by communicating their concerns to the school.
- Incidents of bullying which occur **outside** of school will only be dealt with where such incidents **clearly impact** on the school life of the alleged victim.

### **Indications of Bullying**

All staff should be watching for signs of bullying. The following indicators may suggest that a pupil is being bullied;

- anxiety about travelling to and from school,
- requesting parents to drive and collect them,
- changing route of travel.
- unwillingness to go to school or refusal to attend,
- deterioration in educational performance,
- loss of concentration
- loss of enthusiasm and interest in school.
- pattern of physical illnesses e.g. headaches, stomach aches.
- unexplained changes in mood or behaviour: it may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or especially after longer school holidays.
- unusual demands for money for school. The children will always get a note from school if they need to bring in money.
- visible signs of anxiety or distress- stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, becoming clingy, attention seeking, difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, bedwetting.
- spontaneous, out of character comments about other children.
- possessions missing or damaged.
- reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling him.

### **Types of Bullying**

#### **(a) Physical**

This includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people up.

#### **(b) Verbal**

Verbal abuse can take the form of name calling. It may be directed towards gender, ethnic origin, physical/ social disability, personality etc.

#### **(c) Exclusion**

A child may be bullied simply by being excluded from discussions/ activities, with those they believe to be their friends.

#### **(d) Damage to property or theft**

Pupils may have their property stolen or damaged. Contents of school bag and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor.

#### **(e) Emotional**

Children may feel insecure because of being told that they do not have the academic ability, lunch, brand, etc., perceived to be the norm.

#### **(f) Non-verbal**

Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation. It may be based on the use of aggressive body language. Particularly upsetting to victims can be the so-called 'look' – a facial expression which conveys aggression or dislike.

#### **(g) E-bullying**

Cyber- Bullying has been defined as “ an aggressive, intentional act, carried out by a group or individual, using electronic forms of contact, repeatedly over time against a victim who cannot easily defend him or herself”, Smith et al [2006]. Smith identified seven sub categories of cyber-bullying behaviour; Bullying via

- Text Messages.
- Mobile Telephone Cameras.
- Telephone Calls.
- Email.
- Chat Rooms.
- Instant Messaging.
- Websites.
- Bullying by devices e.g. the X-Box and the Nintendo DS.
- Group Bullying.

#### **(h) School Personnel** - victimisation of a pupil verbally or physically by any staff member.

### **Staff Behaviour**

All staff will be very mindful of their interactions with pupils so that they do not unwittingly engage in or be seen to condone any form of bullying behaviour towards pupils.

**The following are some of the practical ways that we in Scoil Phádraig can emphasise that bullying behaviour is unacceptable, e.g.**

**Teachers will discuss the following strategies with all classes.**

Remember that your silence is the bully's greatest weapon!

- (a) Tell yourself that you do not deserve to be bullied and that it is **WRONG!**
- (b) Be proud of who you are. It is good to be individual.
- (c) Try not to show that you are upset in front of the bully. It is hard but a bully thrives on someone's fear.
- (d) Stay with groups of friends/people. There is safety in numbers.
- (e) Be assertive – shout "NO" Walk confidently away. Go straight to a teacher or member of staff.
- (f) Fighting back may make things worse. Talk to a teacher or parent/guardian first.
- (g) Generally it is best to tell an adult you trust straight away. You will get immediate support.
- (h) Teachers will take you seriously and will deal with bullies in a way which will end the bullying and will not make things worse for you.

**Raising Awareness – Pupils.**

If you know someone is being bullied:

- (a) **TAKE ACTION!** Watching and doing nothing looks as if you are on the side of the bully. It makes the victim feel more unhappy and on their own.
- (b) If you cannot get involved, tell an adult, such as a teacher, **IMMEDIATELY.**
- (c) Don't pretend to be friends with a bully this supports the bullying behaviour.

**Raising awareness – Parents**

- (a) Look for unusual behaviour in your children – for example, they may suddenly not wish to attend school, feel ill regularly, or not complete work to their normal standard.
- (b) Always take an active role in your child's education. Enquire how their day has gone; who have they spent time with, how lunchtime was spent etc.
- (c) If your child feels that he is being bullied, talk it through with him and try to get the full story (remember there are two sides to every story).
- (d) If you feel your child may be a victim of bullying behaviour, inform the class teacher **IMMEDIATELY.** Your complaint will be taken seriously and appropriate action will be taken.
- (e) It is important to advise your son not to fight back – it may make matters worse.
- (f) Tell your son that there is nothing wrong with him. It is not his fault that he is being bullied.
- (g) Make sure that your son is fully aware of the School Policy concerning bullying, and that he should not be afraid to ask for help.

**Raising awareness – In school**

In order to raise the awareness of bullying as in unacceptable behaviour, we will run an Anti-bullying campaign during the last week in September (to give Infants a chance to settle and for teachers to get to know their class).

During this week some of the following ideas may be addressed in the classroom depending upon the age level of the children and the teacher's own discretion.

- Class Rules– each class to develop its own Class Rules and display them on the wall for the school year.
- Books in library on topics related to bullying.
- CD's e.g. "Stay Safe".
- Poems – the children may read poems on bullying or write their own.
- Role Play (and puppets for younger children)
- Religion – Alive O.
- Posters – Art display in September.
- Co- operative games in P.E.
- S.P.H.E.
- Promote self-esteem.
- Assembly – The Principal will discuss bullying and the anti-bullying campaigns at assembly each week in September, and highlight bullying every 4/6 weeks to reinforce the message.

## **Comprehensive supervision and monitoring measures**

### **Supervision Measures**

- Class teacher supervision
- Alerting teacher next door if teacher has to leave the room.
- Supervision on corridors
- Playground supervision
- Supervision on tours, educational outings, sports outings (extra personnel brought along)
- Senior pupils help with care of the Infant classes.

### **Monitoring Measures**

- Observations of class teacher, ancillary staff, visiting staff and pupils. Teachers to record serious incidents of bullying behaviour. These records to be held on file by the Principal.
- Alert other teachers and observe if behaviour is recurring (e.g. playground incidents).
- Teacher on Yard Duty to record serious incidents of bullying, on the appropriate Report Form and pass it on to the Principal.

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

### **Procedures for investigating and dealing with an incident of bullying behaviour.**

Teachers are best advised to take a calm, unemotional problem solving approach when dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents/guardians. Such incidents are best investigated outside the classroom situation to avoid public humiliation of the victim or the pupil engaged in bullying. (Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour in Primary and Post Primary Schools. 1993).

All reports of bullying, should be noted, investigated and dealt with by teachers. In that way pupils will gain confidence in "telling". This confidence factor is of vital importance.

In all instances of bullying the Principal is informed straight away as he may have knowledge of previous incidents. The Principal will investigate the "what, when, where, who and why." and will make a note of the incident. This will be in the format of a factual, written record of the discussions with those involved. The Parents/Guardians may have access to these written accounts (names will be deleted). Parents will always be informed if their children are involved in cases of bullying.

### **Dealing with incidents**

It is important to encourage children to tell. If child has not told, their friends could tell. Principal/Class Teacher will notify Yard Teachers of situation requiring monitoring.

- (i) The relevant teacher will record the bullying behaviour in the Standardised Recording Template.
- (ii) A copy of this report will be given to the Principal.
- (iii) Teacher and/or Principal and Parents of the pupils involved will meet to discuss and resolve the matter.
- (iv) Oversight arrangements require that once a term, the School Principal will provide a report to the Board of Management setting out,
  - (a) The overall number of bullying cases reported (by means of the Recording Template) to the Principal, since the last meeting.and (b) confirmation that all these cases have been or are being dealt with in accordance with the School's Anti-Bullying Policy.
- (v) As part of the oversight arrangements, the Board of Management will undertake an Annual Review of the School's Anti-Bullying Policy and its implementation by the school.

Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and given to the Parents' Association.

The Standard Notification form will be used.

## **Incident in Yard**

### **Child reports to:**

- Teacher on Yard Duty.
- SNA on the yard.
- The child will be encouraged to tell his teacher.
- Yard Teacher to pass on information to the Class Teacher.
- If required the Principal will then be informed. Principal will then investigate the matter.

## **Other incidents**

### **Bullying between two or more children in same class**

- Class Teacher becomes involved
- Principal is informed
- Parents are informed.

**All staff, including Secretaries, Caretaker and Cleaners, are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them (or mentioned to them) to the appropriate teacher or to the Principal.**

## **Sanctions**

### **The purpose of Sanctions**

- To help pupils to learn that their behaviour is unacceptable.
- To help pupils to recognise the effect of their actions on others.
- To help pupils (in ways appropriate to their age and development) to understand that they have choices about their own behaviour and that all choices have consequences.
- To help pupils to learn to take responsibility for their own behaviour.
- To signal to other pupils and to staff that their well-being is being protected.
- To keep the pupil, other pupils or adults safe.

### **Good Practice in the use of Sanctions**

- Sanctions are part of a plan to change behaviour.
- Sanctions are used consistently.
- Sanctions are proportionate, appropriate, fair and display a common sense approach.

### **Sanctions to be used for Pupils who have been involved in Bullying**

#### **Some or all of the following sanctions may be used as appropriate;**

- (i) The pupil will be referred to the Principal for investigation/discussion.
- (ii) Parents will be informed and will be asked to come to the school to discuss the situation.
- (iii) Meeting with Parents, Teacher, Pupil and Principal to discuss the situation.
- (iv) Agreed sanctions imposed, in line with the school's Code of Behaviour.
- (v) Continued monitoring by Principal and follow-up meetings with Parents, if required.
- (vi) In cases of serious, repeated bullying a pupil may be suspended. In such cases the Principal may seek guidance and support from outside agencies e.g. N.E.P.S., H.S.E., Community Psychological Services, N.C.S.E., N.E.W.B. or Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, (Kill Health Centre).

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

The Principal will ensure that the parents are fully aware of the situation so that they can better support their child.

Whole school/class lessons will be covered dealing with respect, self-esteem, the issue of bullying, cyber-bullying etc.

The child will be praised for telling and will be reminded to tell again if the bullying is repeated.

The class teacher and all staff members will monitor the situation.

Parents will keep the lines of communication open at home.

Implement an SPHE programme to increase the self-esteem of victim and the bully.

Make sure the victim has support of friends.

Provide the victims with strategies to deal with bullying – role-play to give them the skills and the confidence to deal with some forms of conflict themselves.

Help the bully by making them aware of their behaviour.

Circle time.

**8. Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils**

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

**9. 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.

**10.** This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on \_\_\_\_\_

**11.** 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.

**12.** 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:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_  
(Principal)

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_