

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

SCOIL CHLOCHAIR MHUIRE, CARRIGTWOHILL.

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 of Scoil Chlochair Mhuire, 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; and
 - 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.
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, (*Physical aggression, damage to property, extortion, intimidation, verbal intimidation, isolation, name calling, slugging*)

- cyber-bullying (*text messaging, picture/video clips via mobile phone cameras, mobile phone calls, emails, chat room bullying, instant messaging, bullying via social websites, any means of electronic communication*) 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.

This is not a definitive list. Harassment of anybody within the school community is not acceptable.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

However, in the context of this policy, placing a once-off offensive or hurtful public message, image or statement on a social network site or other public forum where that message, image or statement can be viewed and/or repeated by other people will be regarded as bullying behaviour.

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

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

4. Investigating and dealing with bullying is relevant to all members of staff.
5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:
 - *Through a programme of positive action the school promotes an atmosphere of friendship, respect and tolerance, e.g. SPHE curriculum, Grow in Love, Stay Safe, Walk Tall, RSE, Friends for Life, Happiness Homework.*
 - *Positive self-esteem is fostered among the pupils by celebrating individual differences, special needs and achievements, by acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour and by providing opportunities for success.*
 - *Internet safety is encouraged throughout the school supported by the school's Acceptable Use Policy and the Web Wise Programme published by the NCTE. Pupils have limited access to the internet and only under the supervision of a responsible adult..*
 - *Pupils are helped to develop empathy by discussing feelings and by trying to put themselves in the place of others, for example during circle time activities and drama.*
 - *Teachers respond sensitively to pupils who disclose incidents of bullying.*
 - *The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed regularly with the pupils.*
 - *The staff is particularly vigilant in monitoring pupils who are considered at risk of being bullied.*
 - *A copy of the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and Code of Behaviour are available to all parents.*
 - *A child friendly version of the main points of the anti bullying policy will be on display in the corridors & classrooms to promote good behaviour.*
 - *The playground is supervised at break time and corridors are monitored when children are going to and from yard and going home.*

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

Investigation

- *Upon report or witnessing bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher will initially investigate the behaviour/complaint and report to the class teacher.*
- *If any teacher is made aware that a child in the school has been a victim of bullying behaviour via social media (facebook, instagram, snapchat, viber etc.) they will immediately inform the relevant class teacher who will then inform the parents of the children involved to alert them as to their child's activities online.*
- *Parents who have a concern regarding bullying behaviour will be referred directly to the class teacher as per complaints procedure.*
- *Non-teaching staff are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying to the relevant class teacher.*
- *In the case of a complaint regarding a staff member, this should first be raised with the staff member in question, allowing time for resolution and then if necessary to the principal.*
- *In investigation and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.*
- *The staff will monitor closely the children who are at risk of being bullied or bullying.*
- *Parents and pupils are required to cooperate with any investigation and assist the school in solving and restoring as far as practicable the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible.*
- *Serious cases of bullying behaviour will be referred immediately to the principal or deputy principal.*

Follow-up (When it has been established that bullying has taken place.)

- *The parents of the parties involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken, with reference to the school's Anti-Bullying Policy and Code of Behaviour.*
- *Teachers will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour reported by either pupils, staff or parents/guardians. Such incidents will be investigated outside the classroom situation to avoid the public humiliation of the victim or the pupil engaged in bullying behaviour. In any incident of bullying, two staff members will speak to each pupil involved separately from other children in an attempt to get both sides of the story. All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide useful information in this way:*
 1. *When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the teacher will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.*
 2. *If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually and then the individuals are met as a group to resolve the issues.*
 3. *Children may also be asked to write down their account of the incident.*
 4. *If it is concluded that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to her how she is in breach of the Anti-Bullying Policy and try to get her to see the situation from the victim's point of view.*

- *In any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, her parents and the school.*
- *Follow-up meetings with relevant parties involved will be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.*

Recording of Bullying Behaviour

- *All reports of bullying, no matter how trivial will be noted, investigated and dealt with by teachers. In that way pupils gain confidence in reporting. This confidence factor is of vital importance.*
- *The relevant teacher must record the bullying behaviour in the standardised recording template where he/she considers the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days, after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred, or where the school has decided as part of its anti-bullying policy that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable. in serious cases of bullying. A copy must be provided to the principal or deputy principal.*
- *The principal will provide a report to the board of management setting out the following:*
 1. *The overall number of bullying cases reported by means of the bullying recording template, to the principal or deputy principal since the previous board meeting.*
 2. *Confirmation that all these cases have been, or are being dealt with, in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy.*
- *In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account;*
 1. *Whether the bullying has ceased*
 2. *Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable*
 3. *Whether the relationships between parties have been resolved as far as is practicable*
 4. *Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school principal or deputy principal.*
- *Where a parent/guardian is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents/guardians must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures*
- *In the event where parents/guardians have exhausted the school's complaints procedures and are still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents/guardians of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.*

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

The following suggestions will be implemented at an age-appropriate level:

- Buddy system to support pupil(s) involved in developing friendships
- Classroom lessons dealing with raising self-esteem, e.g. circle time
- Providing a block of time with the learning support teacher for social and emotional development with parental permission.
- Revise school rules with all children

- Encourage friendships and positive relationships at all times with heightened awareness at certain times of the year e.g. Friendship Week
- Host an information evening for parents and children on cyber safety and cyber bullying
- Seek advice and support from outside agencies such as NEPS and CAMHS
- Refer to Behaviour Support Guidelines published by NEPS
- Encourage participation in outside clubs and sports etc. to build confidence and friendship

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 22/10/2020.
11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, and is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request and provided to the Parents' Association. 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 every school year.

Signed: *John Fitzgerald*
 Chairperson of Board of Management
 Date: 22/10/2020

Signed: *Nora Moran*
 Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management
 Date: 22/10/2020