



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 of Scoil Chualann has adopted the following anti-bullying policy within the framework of the school's overall code of behaviour. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools which were published in September 2013.

The school community must adhere to this policy.

2. Key principles of best practice

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 this policy.**

Definition of Bullying

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
- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

Isolated or once-off incidents of intentional negative behaviour, including a once-off offensive or hurtful text message or other private messaging, do not fall within the definition of bullying and will 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.

Further information relating to the different types of bullying is available in section 2.2 of the "Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools".

This policy applies to activities and events that take place;

- During school time (including break times)
- On school tours
- During extra-curricular activities
- Coming to and leaving school

Scoil Chualann reserves the right to take action against bullying perpetrated outside the school which spills over into the school.

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

Carmel Ní Ghairbhín, Principal

Sinéad Ní Chréan-Loinsigh, Deputy Principal

All class teachers and the learning support team

Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

5. Education and Prevention Strategies

The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber bullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:

- The school code of discipline is taught to all the children in the school
- The School's anti-bullying code is taught to all the children in the school (I am a kind child. I understand that everybody has the right to feel safe in school. I don't bully others. I don't support bullying).
- Posters which refer to the policy are displayed around the school and in classrooms
- The anti-bullying policy is explained at assembly at the beginning of the school year to ensure that the children understand it
- The policy is referred to regularly at daily assembly
- A whole school approach is used to teach the Stay Safe programme in the second term
- Circle time
- Buddy system "C6ras na gCairde" for junior infants. Sixth class help the infants in the yard.
- Children are taught problem solving skills to help them to resolve conflicts
- Children with special needs are taught the school discipline code and the anti-bullying code through the use of social stories. This is done to boost the child's self-esteem.
- Friendship week
- Talks for parents
- Suggestion boxes in the classroom and in the hall
- Bullying awareness day/days

Procedures to prevent Cyber bullying:

- Staff, pupils, parents and Board of Management (BoM) to be made aware of issues surrounding cyber bullying
- Pupils will be advised not to reply to upsetting texts/posts but to capture them, to block the sender and to speak to a trusted adult about the matter
- Cyberbullying will be addressed at assembly on a regular basis
- Posting of our anti-bullying statement in classrooms and in the hall

- Use of Webwise to teach respectful and safe online communication as part of the SPHE programme in 5th and 6th classes
- Guest speakers to speak to 5th and 6th classes about cyberbullying
- Local community Garda will be invited to speak to 5th and 6th classes to advise them about the dangers of cyberbullying
- Information sessions will be organised to inform parents about cyberbullying (CARI, Barnardos, community guard)
- School policy states that children's mobile phones are switched off and kept in the office during the school day
- Staff and students are expected to comply with the school's acceptable use policy

No pupil under 14 years is permitted to register with Facebook or Instagram; it is against the law.

6. Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

The primary aim 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);

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:

Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s)) understand this approach from the outset.

Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.

All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher (class teacher, deputy principal, principal) depending on the circumstances.

Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners will report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

Investigating and dealing with incidents

- 1 The class teacher/teacher on yard duty will record incidents of bullying behaviour in the yard book/incident book.
- 2 The incident will be investigated outside of the classroom: What, who, when, where, why.
- 3 If a group is involved, each member will be asked for his/her account of what happened. The group will then be met as a group and each member will be asked for their account of what happened to ensure that everyone is clear about each other's accounts. Children in the group will be supported through the possible pressures that they may face from the other members of the group after interview with the teacher.
- 4 An effort will be made to resolve any issues and to restore as far as is practicable the relationships of the parties involved rather than to apportion blame.
- 5 Scoil Chualann reserves the right to ask those involved to write down their accounts of the incidents if this action is deemed appropriate.
- 6 Once the relevant teacher determines that a pupil has engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts will be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
- 7 In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred parents of the parties involved will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and to explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy). The school will give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school. The child will promise that this won't happen again and they will write a note to this effect if this is deemed appropriate.
- 8 Any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his/her parents and the school.
- 9 The situation will be monitored to ensure that the problem has been resolved. Any measures taken will be recorded. The problem will be reviewed at a follow-up meeting.
- 10 A situation may be dealt with according to the school's code of discipline should the relevant teacher and the principal feel that this is necessary.
- 11 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 at Appendix 3 of Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2013.
- 12 If a case is not resolved it will be referred to the Board of Management. The Board will be informed of the overall number of bullying cases by means of the recording template at Appendix 3 once a term.
- 13 If a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures they will be referred to the school's complaints procedures.
- 14 In the event that a parent is still not satisfied he/she has the right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

In the event of a cyberbullying incident (pupils being cyberbullied)

- Children will be advised not to reply to messages that harass or annoy them
- Children will be told to keep the message (evidence will be required), block the sender and to tell someone they trust.
- Any incident reported to the school principal will be investigated and referred to the Gardaí where there is sufficient proof that cyberbullying has taken place

In the event of a cyberbullying incident (teacher being cyberbullied)

Teachers will be advised to capture and report abusive material (evidence will be required). This evidence will be given to the Gardaí

7. Children who have been bullied will be supported and afforded the opportunity to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem. The school will liaise with the appropriate agencies should a child need further support.

Children involved in bullying behaviour will also be supported on an ongoing basis. For those with low self-esteem, opportunities will be developed to increase feelings of worth.

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

(See Section 6.8.16 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):

- Aspects of the anti-bullying code which empower pupils who are affected by bullying will be referred to on a regular basis (I understand that everyone has the right to feel safe in school)
- Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour will be reminded that they must observe the code (I don't bully others. I don't support bullying.)
- Circle time
- Green Schools Programme
- Buddy system(Cór na gCairde)
- Cór na nÓg
- Football training/games
- Stay Safe Programme
- Write-a-Book Project

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 **18 June 2014**.

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.

Useful Websites

www.spunout.ie

www.kidsmart.org.uk/beingsmart

www.bbc.co.uk./schools/bullying

www.childline.ie/index.php/support/bullying/1395

www.chatdanger.com

www.kidpower.org

www.webwise.ie

www.watchyourspace.ie

www.barnardos.ie

www.childnet.int.org

www.antibullying.net

<http://ie.reachout.com>

www.abc.tcd.ie

www.sticksandstones.ie

www.internetsafety.ie