



# Scoil Chroí Naofa

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## Anti-Bullying Policy

### Introduction:

At a staff meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> October 2016 the staff reviewed the existing policy in line with current guidelines as outlined in circular 045/2013.

1. In accordance with Túsla requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the Board of Management of Scoil Chroí Naofa 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 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,
- 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, 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. The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:**

The relevant class teacher and principal if necessary will investigate and deal with the bullying. He/she must record the bullying behaviour in the standardised recording template. (see attached)

#### **5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber- bullying and identity-based bullying including 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.
- The SPHE curriculum, including Walk Tall and Stay Safe programmes, 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 respond sensitively to pupils who disclose incidents of bullying.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed regularly with the pupils.
- Staff are particularly vigilant in monitoring pupils who are considered at risk of bullying/being bullied.
- Initiatives and programmes focused on developing pupils' awareness and understanding of bullying, including its causes and effects dealing explicitly with the issue of identity-based bullying and in particular homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- Prevention and awareness raising measures to deal explicitly with cyber-bullying. The best way to address cyber-bullying is to prevent it happening in the first place. Prevention and any awareness raising measures will focus on educating pupils on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while on-line and also on developing a culture of reporting any concerns about cyber-bullying. The prevention and awareness raising measures will also take into account the scope for cyber-bullying to occur as a result of access to technology from within the school.
- The school's approach will take particular account of the needs of pupils with disabilities or with SEN, will join up with other relevant school policies and supports and will ensure that all the services that provide for such pupils work together. Approaches to decreasing the likelihood of bullying for pupils with SEN will include improving inclusion, focusing on developing 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 and helping one another as central.
- All disclosed incidents of bullying are investigated.

- Members of the BOM 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, by communicating concerns to the school.

**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:**

**Investigation Procedures**

- The primary aim for the relevant 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);
- In investigating 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;
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It will be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly;
- Non-teaching staff such as the secretary, coaches, bus drivers, work placement students, will be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;
- Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation 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;
- It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset;
- Teachers will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents;
- Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
- 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 very useful information in this way;
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This will be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner;
- If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved will be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member will be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements;
- It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s);
- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, 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 (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 and the supports for their pupils;
- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been 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;

- It will also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school;
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should 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. This can have a therapeutic effect;
- 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.
- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher will, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:
  - Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
  - Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
  - Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable; and
  - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school principal;
- Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents will be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures;
- In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school will advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

### **Follow-Up Procedures**

- To ensure that any such cases are dealt with appropriately, the school's anti-bullying policy must provide for appropriate linkages with the overall code of behaviour and provide for referral to be made to relevant external agencies and authorities where appropriate. In cases where a school has serious concerns in relation to managing the behaviour of a pupil, the advice of the National Education Psychological Service (NEPS) should be sought.
- Serious instances of bullying behaviour should, in accordance with the *Children First and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*, be referred to the HSE Children and Family Services and/or Gardaí as appropriate.

### **Recording Procedures**

The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour will adhere to the following:

(i) While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher will use his/her professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same;

-If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

-The relevant teacher must use the recording template to record the bullying behaviour where he/she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred;

The recording template must be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the principal. The timeline for recording bullying behaviour in the recording template does not in any way preclude the relevant teacher from consulting the Principal at an earlier stage in relation to a case.

The effectiveness of the school's anti-bullying policy will be subject to continuous review in the light of incidents of bullying behaviour encountered. The school will make provision for periodic examination of the prevention and intervention strategies in place.

At least once in every school term, the Principal will provide a report to the Board of Management setting out:

- (i) the overall number of bullying cases reported (by means of the bullying recording template) since the previous report to the Board and
- (ii) confirmation that all cases referred to at (i) above have been or are being, dealt with in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy and the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools*.

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

Pupils who have been bullied will participate, in a class-based setting, in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed.

A programme of support for those pupils involved in bullying behaviour will also be part of the school's intervention process. This will take place on an on-going basis. For those with low self-esteem, opportunities will be developed to increase feelings of self-worth. Learning strategies applied within the school will allow for the enhancement of the pupil's self-worth and help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.

**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 20<sup>th</sup> March, 2014.

**11.** This policy has been made available to school personnel and is readily accessible to parents and pupils on request. 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 and be readily accessible to parents and pupils on request. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal

Date of next review: **October 2017**