

Scoil Iosa Anti-Bullying Policy

1. Statement of Compliance

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 Iosa 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. 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 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 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*.

This policy applies to activities and events that take place

- During school time (including break times)
- School tours/trips
- Extra-curricular activities.

Scoil Iosa reserves the right to take action against bullying perpetrated outside the school where a staff member judges that its consequences are having a detrimental effect on school life.

4. Responsibility

Investigating and dealing with matters of bullying will normally be the responsibility of the class teacher. When required the principal and other members of staff will assist and support the class teacher in this work.

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:

- * We will cultivate a culture where respect for all and helping one another are central. We will encourage inclusivity and nurture the development of social skills especially among pupils with disabilities and special educational needs.
- * We will provide pupils with opportunities to enhance a positive sense of self-worth through curricular and extra-curricular activities e.g. sport, quizzes, concerts etc.
- * We will aim to develop empathy, respect and resilience in pupils on an ongoing basis. These qualities will be emphasised in each classroom at least once a term.
- * Through teaching the SPHE curriculum we will explore bullying as well as the inter-related areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships. Through the stay safe programme we will seek to enhance children's self-protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying.
- * We will take opportunities when they arise in all subject areas to foster an attitude of respect for all: to promote the value of diversity, to address prejudice and stereotyping and to highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- * We will continue to educate pupils on the importance of staying safe on-line and encourage them to report any incidents of cyber-bullying.
- * Anti-bullying posters will be displayed in prominent positions throughout the school. These posters will contain information on:
 - 1) What constitutes bullying
 - 2) Why people become bullies
 - 3) What to do if you are bullied
 - 4) What to do if you witness bullying
- * Pupils will be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying and will be told that doing so they are behaving responsibly and helping the victim and the bully.

6. Procedures for Dealing with Bullying Behaviour

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:

- (1) Our primary aim in investigating and dealing with bullying is to resolve any issue and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved
- (2) The relevant teacher will exercise their professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how to resolve the situation.
- (3) All reports will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
- (4) Pupils (and parents if necessary) are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist as far as practicable to restore the relationship between the parties involved as quickly as possible.
- (5) When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour the relevant teacher will seek answers to questions of what, where, who and why. The relevant teacher will use his/her professional discretion as regards what notes, if any, should be kept at this stage.
- (6) 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.
- (7) 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 perspective of the pupil being bullied.
- (8) In the event of that a disciplinary sanction is required this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school.
- (9) Pupils who are not involved directly in the incident can also provide very useful information and will be expected to assist the investigation.
- (10) 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 on the DES template and reported to the Principal. In some cases bullying behaviour will be recorded and immediately reported to the Principal.
- (11) 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:
 - (a) Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased
 - (b) Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as practicable.
 - (c) Whether the relationship between parties have been restored as far as in practicable and
 - (d) Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal.
- (12) If a case remains unresolved the matter will be referred to the school's Board of Management. The Board will also be briefed in relation to the number, if any, of templates which have been completed.
- (13) Where a parent is not satisfied that a school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, parents will be referred as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedure.

(14) In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedure and is still not satisfied, the school will advise the parent of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

(15) At any stage during the procedure the Code of Behaviour will be invoked where doing so will be deemed prudent by the relevant teacher and principal.

Referral to Outside Agencies:

Bullying behaviour can be part of a continuum of behaviour rather than a stand-alone issue and in some cases behaviour may escalate beyond that which can be described as bullying to serious physical or sexual assault or harassment. Accordingly instances of bullying will be dealt with in tandem with the school's overall code of behaviour. In cases where a school has serious concerns in relation to managing the behaviour of a pupil, the advice of the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) will be sought.

Serious instances of bullying behaviour will, in accordance with the Children First and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary School's be referred to the HSE Children and Family Services and /or Gardaí as appropriate.

Where school personnel have concerns about a child but are not sure whether to report the matter to the HSE, the Designated Liaison Person will seek advice from the HSE Children and Family Social Services.

(cf. Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011)

(cf. Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools DES)

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

1. We will endeavour to repair any relationships that have been damaged between the child who was bullied and the child who has been involved in bullying behaviour.
2. We will try to raise the self-esteem of the children involved by taking opportunities to praise their achievements in class and in extra curricular activities such as sport, drama etc.
3. We will help to build the resilience of the child who has been bullied to help ensure that this child will not be a victim of bullying again.
4. We will provide opportunities to learn and develop friendship and social skills.
5. We will closely monitor pupils (those bullying and those being bullied) in the weeks following a bullying incident.

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 _____ [date].

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: _____

Date of next review: _____