

Scoil Bhríde Anti - Bullying Policy January 2017

- **Introduction:** *In accordance with Circular 0045/2013, this new policy on Anti- Bullying has been formulated and approved by the Board of Management.*

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1. **Full 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 Bhríde 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*.

4. **Who is Responsible for What?:** The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:

- Class Teacher: deals with the initial allegation/suspicion of bullying behaviour.
- Principal: where bullying behaviour is suspected by the class teacher the principal should be informed.

- Deputy Principal, Kevin Mullin: is responsible for formulating the Behaviour Support System (Code of Behaviour, Anti-Bullying Policy & Supervision Policy) (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

5. **Strategies for Education & Prevention:** 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:

General:

- an awareness on the part of staff of the extremely serious nature of bullying and the severe consequences that may result in situations where it is not addressed.
- a recognition by staff of the fact that any student can be the victim of, or perpetrator of bullying behaviour.
- Regular reminder in class where pupils and staff reflect on the importance of a positive school climate, where each individual is respected and where the development and preservation of self-esteem is valued.
- Preventative strategies include staff vigilance and a comprehensive SPHE plan in every class.
- A school approach to discipline which reflects the fact that pupils model their behaviour on adults and which therefore employs techniques such as positive motivation and recognition as opposed to methods based on threat and fear.
- raising the awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour through curricular initiative in areas such as novel exploration, drama, co-operation and the control of aggression.
- The school Anti-Bullying Charter is displayed in all classrooms and opportunities to focus on the theme of awareness week are taken in September each year.
- comprehensive supervision and monitoring measures are in place through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation.
- Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should 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.
- Ensure that pupils know who to tell and how to tell e.g.:
 - Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time.
 - Hand note up with homework.
 - Get a parent or guardian to tell.
 - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.

- Identify clear protocols to encourage parent(s)/guardians to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied. The protocol is developed in consultation with Parents representatives on the Board of Management and in consultation with the Parents Council.

Cyber Bullying: Cyber bullying includes (but is not limited to) communicating via electronic means with the objective of causing hurt, fear, embarrassment, humiliation, alarm and/or distress to one or more persons. Cyber bullying includes the use of mobile phones and the internet with the objective of upsetting someone. It may take the form of general insults or impersonation, defamation or prejudice-based bullying.

Unlike other forms of bullying a once-off posting can constitute bullying.

While this policy addresses issues related to cyber bullying of students (i.e. situations in which one or more students are the victim[s] of bullying), the policy also applies to teaching and other school staff.

Key Measures re Cyber Bullying

- Staff will endeavour to identify signs of cyber bullying and to keep informed about the technologies that children commonly use.
- Advice will be communicated to help students protect themselves from being involved in bullying (as perpetrator or as victim) and to advise them on reporting any incidents.
- Students will be informed about cyber bullying in the course of their education.
- Pupil mobile phones are not allowed.
- Gardaí visit the school regularly and will talk about cyber bullying from time to time.
- Teachers will dedicate a standalone lesson to deal with the issue of cyber bullying.
- Students and staff are expected to comply with the school's policy on the use of computers in the School. (Acceptable Use Policy)
- Parents will be provided with information and advice on cyber bullying.
- Parents and students are advised that it is illegal for a child under 13 to register with and use many social media networks, including Facebook, Instagram, and SnapChat.
- Scoil Bhríde's internet is filtered by Scoilnet which endeavours to block access to inappropriate web sites, apps etc.
- No pupil is allowed to work on the Internet within the school without a member of staff present.
- Delivery of Garda SPHE Programmes at Primary level. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardai, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying.

Identity Based Bullying: Identity Based Bullying includes (but is not limited to) homophobic and transphobic bullying, racist bullying, bullying based on a person's membership of the Travelling community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

Key Measures re Identity Bullying

- Working together in a supportive, respectful partnership within an inclusive school environment is central to our vision:
- Many of the above issues are dealt with on an ongoing basis through our S.P.H.E. curriculum of which R.S.E. is a key component. Programmes such as Stay Safe and Walk Tall are followed in the school.
- Diversity is celebrated in the school, through highlighting different cultural Celebrations.
- Identity based themes are explored.

(see Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*)

6. **Procedures re 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:

The School Recognises that:

- early intervention is crucial;
- a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach should be adopted;
- incidents are best investigated outside the classroom situation;
- humiliation of victim or bully should be avoided at all costs;
- interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned;
- other pupils can sometimes provide useful information;
- dealing effectively with conflict in a non-aggressive manner is setting an example for pupils;
- parental input and co-operation is valuable;
- both victim and bully need help.

Investigation of Bullying:

- All interviews will take place outside the classroom situation with due regard to child protection measures e.g. door to office/room will be left open.
- A written record of discussions will be kept (see Appendix 4; Incident record Sheet) and the pupil may be asked to give his own written account, if this is appropriate.

- If a group is involved, pupils will be interviewed individually and then the group will be met collectively, where each will be asked to give his account. Each member of a group will be helped to handle the possible pressures that often face them from other members after interview by teacher/Principal.
- If it is concluded that a pupil has engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him that he is in breach of the schools Code of Behaviour and Discipline.
- Efforts will be made to assist the pupil in seeing the situation from the victim's point of view.
- In cases where bullying behaviour has occurred, parents/guardians of the two parties involved will be contacted. They will be referred to this school policy. Action being taken
- and the reason for it will be explained to them and ways in which they can reinforce or support the school action will be explored.
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.

Follow Up:

- Follow-up contact with the two parties may be organised to take place within one month of the investigation. The possible therapeutic effect of a bringing together of victim and bully at a future date will be considered if the victim is ready and agreeable to do so.
- Following any incident of bullying, the school recognises that issues relating to the prevention of bullying may need to be examined. This will involve exploration of suitable programmes with victims, bullies and their peers. Whole school focus or specific class lessons may need to be revised dealing with respect, self-esteem, aggression or the issue of bullying itself.
- If, during the course of the investigation, there are child protection concerns, the Children First 2011 guidelines become relevant as does the schools Child Protection policy.
- Information re any past Bullying issues will be passed on to new teacher at the start of each year.
- Where the school feels an individual needs specific support from outside agencies, a referral to NEPS will be considered.
- The effectiveness of this school policy will be assessed regularly with regard to the level and type of bullying behaviour that may be happening in the school. Amendments will be made to reflect any change in approach deemed necessary.

Recording of Bullying Behaviour:

- Where a bullying investigation has been carried out the class teacher will keep a written record of the incident (see Appendix 4.)
- Behaviour reflection sheet followed by appointment if required.
- Where the principal has used the Bullying Incident Investigation Record Form (see Appendix 3), a copy will be kept in the office along with his/her own records of the investigation.

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(see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

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

- The relevant teacher will endeavour to assure the child that they are the victim and that they did the right thing by telling.
- The teacher will monitor the situation in the period after the bullying incident/s and regularly check with the child/children to see how things are going.
- The Principal will follow up by checking in regularly on how the situation has developed.
- Information re any past Bullying issues will be passed on to new teacher at the start of each year.

(see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

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. Adoption Date of Policy: This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 17th January 2017.

11. Availability of Policy: This policy has been made available to school community, and is available to parents and pupils on request. It has been provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

12. **Review of Policy:** 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 and provided to the Parents' Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department. The Principal is required to report to the BoM once a term as to the number, if any, of reports that have been compiled and whether the matter has been resolved in accordance with this Policy.

13. List of Appedices:

- ✓ Appendix 1: Scoil Bhríde's Anti-Bullying Charter
- ✓ Appendix 2: Practical Tips for Building a Positive School Culture & Climate
- ✓ Appendix 3: Bullying Incident Investigation Form
- ✓ Appendix 4: Checklist for Annual Review of the Anti-Bullying Policy & its Implementation

Signed: _____ (Principal)

Date: _____

Signed: _____ (Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: _____

Date of next review: _____

Appendix 1 Anti-Bullying Charter

- Every pupil has the right to be free from bullying during his time in ScoilBhríde
- Our school will not tolerate any unkind actions or remarks, even if these were not meant to hurt.
- Any series of unkind actions or comments will be called bullying.
- Bullying can be physical, verbal or psychological.
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Pupils: Remember your CODE-

- Be Gentle
- Be a friend
- Tell about bullying

Say No.....Get Away.....Tell someone

Parents

- Be alert to signs of bullying -of or by your child.
- Look for support
- Do not encourage your child to "give as good as you get"

We, the teacher, consider bullying to be a serious matter.

We are a telling school.

We recognise that the victim and bully need help

ADULTS MUST PROTECT CHILDREN

- Where bullying behaviour is suspected by the class teacher, the matter should be referred to the principal.
- An "Anti-Bullying Investigation Procedure" form may be filled out as a result.
- If a child receives 2 bullying investigation letters: the principal will phone his parents to discuss the situation.
- If a child receives a 3rd: parents will receive a letter documenting the child's history of bullying.
- 4th: Parents will be called to a formal meeting with the principal and other staff members concerned.
- 5th: Parents will be called to meet with the principal and the chairperson of the Board of Management (or a representative nominated by the chairperson.)
Suspension may be imposed.

N.B. If the bullying behaviour is regarded as gross or serious, it may be deemed necessary by the principal to skip some of the above stages.

Appendix 2: Practical Tips for Building a Positive School Culture and Climate

The following are some practical tips for immediate actions that can be taken to help build a positive school culture and climate and to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour.

- Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.
- Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.
- Catch them being good-notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school-this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN.
- Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.
- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.
- Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use.
- Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.
- Actively involve parents and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media.
- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.
- Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.
- All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- Ensure there is adequate playground/schoolyard/outdoor supervision.
- School staff can get pupils to help them to identify bullying "hotspots" and "hot times" for bullying in the school.
- Hotspots tend to be in the playground/schoolyard/outdoor areas, changing rooms, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision. Hot times again tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when pupils are in the playground/schoolyard.

Appendix 3: Bullying Incident Investigation Form

'Bullying is unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or a group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

Bullying in any form will not be tolerated in Scoil Bhríde. It is our school policy to take any matter of alleged bullying very seriously.

Please supply any details which you think may assist our investigation.

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name: _____ Class: _____

2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

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3. Source of Bullying Concern (tick relevant box(es))*

Pupil concerned	
Other pupil	
Parent/Guardian	
Teacher	
SNA	
Other (please specify)	

4. Location of Incidents (tick relevant box(es))*

Yard	
Classroom	
Field	
Toilets	
On the way to/from school	
Other (please specify)	

5. Name of Person(s) who reported the bullying concern

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6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) *

Physical Aggression		Cyber-bullying	
Damage to Property		Intimidation	
Isolation/Exclusion		Malicious Gossip	
Name Calling		Other (specify)	

7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:

Homophobic	Disability/SEN Related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

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9. Details of actions taken

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Signed: _____ (Relevant Teacher)

Date: _____

Date submitted to Principal: _____

Appendix 4: Checklist for Annual Review of the Anti-Bullying Policy and its Implementation

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual review of the school's anti bullying policy and its implementation. The following checklist must be used for this purpose. The checklist is an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. In order to complete the checklist, an examination and review involving both quantitative and qualitative analysis, as appropriate across the various elements of the implementation of the school's anti-bullying policy will be required.

	Yes /No
Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools?	
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	
Is the Board satisfied that school staff are sufficiently familiar with the policy and procedures to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy and procedures in their day to day work?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	
Has the Board discussed how well the school is handling all reports of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and not therefore included in the Principal's periodic report to the Board?	
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	

Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	
Has the data available from cases reported to the Principal (by the bullying recording template) been analysed to identify any issues, trends or patterns in bullying behaviour?	
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	

Signed _____ Date _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _____ Date _____
Principal

**Notification Regarding the Board of Management's Annual Review of the
Anti-Bullying Policy**

To: _____

The Board of Management of _____ wishes to inform you that:

- The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of _____ [date].
- This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in **Appendix 4** of the Department's *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

Signed _____ Date _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _____ Date _____
Principal