

Scoil Mhuire na mBraithre - CBS Primary Tralee

Roll No. 18247K

Anti-Bullying Policy

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 Mhuire na mBraithre 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.

We are proud at Scoil Mhuire na mBraithre that by and large the children in our school are happy children. There is an atmosphere of respect and this is created by the parents, children, staff and school leadership working together in tandem. Inappropriate behaviour is challenged and high standards of behaviour are acknowledged. This is ingrained in day to day behaviour

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:

1. A positive school culture and climate which-
 - is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
 - is consistent with the Catholic ethos of the school;
 - encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
 - promotes respectful relationships across the school community;
2. Effective leadership;
 - a school-wide approach involving management, parents, teaching and support staff, and pupils;
 - a shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact;
3. 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.
4. Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
5. Supports for staff;
6. Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
7. On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

What is 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. This behaviour is intentional and targeted towards an individual.

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- **Physical aggression:** This behaviour includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While pupils often engage in ‘mess fights’, they can sometimes be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain
- **Intimidation:** Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation: it may be based on the use of very aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon. Particularly upsetting can be a facial expression which conveys aggression and/or dislike.
- **Extortion:** Demands for money may be made, often accompanied by threats (sometimes carried out in the event of the targeted pupil not delivering on the demand). A pupil may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to another who is engaged in bullying behaviour.
- **Isolation/deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other relational bullying:** This occurs where a certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or all of the class group. This practice is usually initiated by the person engaged in bullying behaviour and can be difficult to detect. It may be accompanied by writing insulting remarks about the pupil in public places, by passing around notes about or drawings of the pupil or by whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard. Relational bullying occurs when a person’s attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. One of the most common forms includes control: “Do this or I won’t be your friend anymore”(implied or stated); a group ganging up against one person (girl or boy); non-verbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumours about a person or giving them the “silent treatment”.
- **Name calling:** Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) which hurts, insults or humiliates should be regarded as a form of bullying behaviour. Often name-calling of this type refers to physical appearance, e.g., size or clothes worn. Accent or distinctive voice characteristics may attract negative attention. Academic ability can also provoke name calling. This tends to operate at two extremes. There are those who are singled out for attention because they are perceived to be weak academically. At the other extreme there are those who, because they are perceived as high achievers, are also targeted.
- **Damage to property:** Personal property can be the focus of attention for bullying behaviour. This may result in damage to clothing, mobile phone or other devices, school

books and other learning material or interference with a pupil's bicycle. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.

· **Cyber-bullying:** This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, e-mail, instant messaging (IM), apps, gaming sites, chat-rooms and other online technologies. Being the target of inappropriate or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying. As cyber-bullying uses technology to perpetrate bullying behaviour and does not require face to face contact, cyber-bullying can occur at any time (day or night). Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyber-bullying. For example, a target may be sent homophobic text messages or pictures may be posted with negative comments about a person's sexuality, appearance etc.

· **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.

Pro-active measures to prevent bullying

· Prior to starting school parents/guardians of all new entrants will receive a copy of the schools Code of Behaviour which includes the Anti-Bullying policy. It is also available on the school's website.

· Each class will highlight the children's awareness of bullying as unacceptable behaviour, in an age-appropriate way. This will be explored through Stay Safe Programme (taught in Junior Infants, 1st, 3rd and 5th class), Walk Tall Programme taught as part of the SPHE Curriculum, Alive-O Religion Programme and specifically the Anti-Bullying Campaign Programme which teaches children to recognise, reject and report bullying.

· School Poster and card campaign which teaches children conflict resolution strategies. This is reinforced with school and class assemblies during Friendship Week .

· Intercultural events: celebrating difference through Music, Art and Drama.

· Code of Behaviour revision each September

What happens when bullying does occur?

1. Parents and children are actively encouraged to report incidents of bullying
2. In addition, classes are surveyed to uncover bullying situations that may have gone unnoticed.
3. All incidents of bullying will be recorded in an incident book which will be retained in the classroom involved.
4. The class teacher or class teacher of the children involved will be responsible for investigating and dealing with/resolving the bullying incidents
5. On being informed of an alleged incident of bullying, the teacher dealing with the report will first interview the victim(s) and discuss the feelings which the victim(s) experienced because of bullying. Support, listening and encouragement guide this work.
6. Teacher will interview the alleged bully. If involving a group, members will be met individually. The interview should be conducted with sensitivity and due regard for the rights of all pupils involved.
7. The child will be encouraged to admit to their bullying behaviour without fear of punishment, and make a solemn promise (in writing) that they will not repeat this behaviour. Only if this promise is broken do parents need to be informed (This reflects a Reform not Blame approach)
8. “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 possible, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame)” DES Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools, Sept. 2013.
9. If the bullying behaviour continues, parents will be informed and a second promise will be made. If this is broken, the Principal will be informed and the child will be sanctioned according to our Code of Behaviour.
10. Incidents of a more serious nature may be referred to the Principal without following the procedures laid out above.
11. If relevant teachers believe the matter has not been resolved within 20 days after the behaviour has been reported, it must be recorded on the **standardised recording template** and a copy must be provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal
12. The procedures include oversight arrangements which require that, at least once in every school term, the Principal will provide a report to the Board of Management setting out:
The overall number of bullying cases reported (by means of the bullying recording template to the Principal or Deputy Principal since the previous report to the Board and ; Confirmation that all of these cases 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.

13. As part of the oversight arrangements, the Board of Management must undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation by the school. Written notification that the review has been completed must be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A standardised notification which must be used for this purpose. A record of the review and its outcome must be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

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.

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.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Board of Management.

This Anti-Bullying Policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 2/6/2024

Signed: Anne Callaghan

Chairperson of Board of Management

Signed: Brenda Smith

Principal/Secretary to the Board of Management

Date: 2/6/2024

Date: 2/6/2024