



Anti-Bullying Policy

June 2022

1. Adoption of Policy

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the Code of Behaviour Guidelines issued by the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB), the Board of Management of Bunscoil 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 Principals

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 (See Appendix 1) 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; involves collaboration among and between staff and pupils 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
- 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 ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

We in Bunscoil Bhríde view bullying as an unacceptable behaviour that will not be tolerated in our school.

We encourage all pupils to support each other by reporting all instances of bullying.

All reports of bullying will be investigated and dealt with sympathetically.

3. Definitions

In accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools bullying is defined as follows:

'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 do not fall within the definition of bullying and should be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of 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 and appears as Appendix 2 of this document.

4. Role of School Personnel

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

- The class teacher(s) initially
- The Principal thereafter if necessary

5. Education and Prevention Strategies

The following education and prevention strategies, at the appropriate and relevant level for each class, will be used by the school:

- Development of awareness raising measures across all aspects of bullying among the children including the development of strategies to engage pupils in addressing problems when they arise. In particular, such strategies need to build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils
- Provision of opportunities to pupils to develop a positive sense of self-worth through both curricular and extra-curricular programmes
- Development of prevention and awareness raising measures focusing on cyber-bullying by educating pupils on appropriate online behaviour, how to stay safe while online

- Promotion of a positive inclusive school culture which has respect for all
- Prevention of bullying and promotion of respect for diversity and inclusiveness through use of particular components of the curriculum. The Social Personal and Health Education (S.P.H.E) curriculum makes specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the inter-related areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety and relationships. The Stay Safe and Relationships and Sexuality Education (R.S.E.) programmes at primary level are personal safety skills programmes which seek to enhance children's self-protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying. Various other social, health and media education programmes can further help to address the problem of bullying behaviour.
- Promotion of co-operation and group enterprise through team sports, school clubs and societies as well as through practical subjects such as Art, Drama, Religious Education and Physical Education
- Provision of opportunities for channelling and learning how to control aggression through sporting activities. Teachers are involved in coaching the school's football, basketball and athletic teams after school and rugby coaching is offered to some classes from outside agencies during the year
- Anti-cyberbullying lessons will be given to classes from 3rd to 6th annually.
- Friendship Week will be held annually in the school. It encourages positive behaviour across the school and is a very enjoyable week for the whole school. This involves a cross-curricular approach to the theme of friendship and is a whole school initiative.
- The Student Council will help to promote the message of friendship throughout the school.

6. Procedures for Investigation, follow-up and recording of alleged bullying behaviour and established intervention strategies

We note that some children engage in low-level negative behaviours towards others. These behaviours may be the same as behaviours which can be deemed as bullying, but do not always fall under the definition of bullying e.g. a child may laugh at another child, this may be hurtful but a one off experience, or it can be part of on-going pattern of behaviour that may amount to bullying. Teachers monitor these behaviours as part of their responsibility. In Bunscoil Bhríde staff are encouraged to keep note of behaviour if and when they see a pattern emerging and to alert other staff. However minor or once off occurrences of negative behaviour may not be recorded and can generally be dealt with using our behaviour system i.e Golden Rules.

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). With this in mind the school's procedures for investigation, follow up and recording of alleged bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of alleged bullying behaviour are as follows (See Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools):

Initial verbal report from child/and or parent/staff member to designated teacher.

Should any member of staff witness possible bullying behaviour s/he should tell the perpetrator to stop immediately and shall make the relevant class teacher aware of the incident.

On receipt of a report the relevant teacher will take a three-step approach to dealing with the allegation of bullying.

Step 1: The relevant teacher speaks to individuals concerned to establish a chain of events and whether bullying has occurred. (See Section 6.8.9 of Anti Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools for detailed steps on how to conduct an investigation). In the case of suspected bullying the relevant teacher will keep written records of the case on Aladdin.

Step 2: 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 it is practical the relationship of the parties involved. The teacher will establish a plan of action on how to resolve the issues within the next 20 school days. These records are stored on Aladdin under Behaviour Report.

This period of time gives the child who has been engaging in bullying behaviour the opportunity to change her behaviour.

If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, parents/guardians of all parties concerned will be contacted by the relevant teacher to inform them of the incident, findings and the plan of action for the next 20 school days.

When the 20 school day period has elapsed, the relevant teacher will determine whether a bullying base has been adequately and appropriately addressed. In doing so, the relevant teacher must, 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 it practicable.

Step 3: In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately resolved by the children 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 stored on Aladdin (Appendix 3 of Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools) and inform the Principal

Should the relevant teacher require the support of the Principal at any point in the procedure, the relevant teacher should discuss the case with the Principal. Where appropriate the Principal can proceed with the case. The relevant teacher shall be included in all further stages of the procedures.

The purpose of these procedures is to resolve the bullying behaviour so that it stops rather than apportioning blame. Below are intervention strategies that will be used.

Intervention Strategies:

If it is deemed necessary that sanctions be implemented, the teacher shall refer to the School's Code of Behaviour.

A behaviour plan is implemented for the child who has been deemed to be bullying. The aim of this is to reward positive behaviour and to encourage the child to make positive changes in her behaviour towards other children. A trusted adult can act as a mentor to encourage positive behaviour in this child in the future.

In relation to bullying in schools, Children First National Guidelines for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011(Children First) and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools provide that in situations where the incident is serious and where the behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive, the school must consult the HSE Children and Family Social Services with a view to drawing up an appropriate response such as a management plan.

Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents must 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 must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

7. Programme of Support

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying involves a whole school approach. Given the complexity of bullying behaviour, no one intervention/support programme works in all situations. Therefore various approaches and intervention strategies may be used, including suggesting that parents seek referrals to appropriate outside agencies in order to receive further support for the pupils and their families if needed.

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. Availability and Review of Policy

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the Patron if requested.

10. 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 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.

This policy was reviewed by the Board of Management on 14th June 2022.

APPENDIX 1: 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 Special Educational Need (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/school yard/outdoor supervision
- School staff can get pupils to help them to identify bullying 'hot spots' and 'hot times' for bullying in the school
 - Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/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/school yard or moving classrooms.
- Support the work of the Student Council

APPENDIX 2: Types of bullying

The following are some of the types of bullying behaviour that can occur amongst pupils:

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.

Isolation/exclusion 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’.

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, email, 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.

Name calling: Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) that 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. 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.

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.

Appendix 3: Template for recording bullying behaviour

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name: _____ Class: _____

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

3. Source of bullying concern/report -tick relevant box(es)

Pupil concerned	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other pupil(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>

Parent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Location of incidents -tick relevant box(es)

Playground	<input type="checkbox"/>
Classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corridor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Toilets	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>

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

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

Physical aggression	Cyber-bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>
Damage to property	Intimidation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Isolation/Exclusion	Malicious gossip	<input type="checkbox"/>
Name calling		<input type="checkbox"/>
Other (specify)		<input type="checkbox"/>

7. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

8. Details of actions taken

Signed _____
(Relevant Teacher)

Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____