

Anti-Bullying Policy



1. 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 Ghobnatan 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) 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

At Scoil Ghobnatan we consider the following to be key elements of a Positive School Culture:

- We acknowledge the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment
- We acknowledge the uniqueness of each individual and their worth as a human being

- We promote positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline, equity and responsibility among all its members
- We have the capacity to change in response to its pupils needs
- We identify aspects of its curriculum through which positive and sustainable influences can be exerted towards forming pupils attitudes and values
- We take particular care of 'at risk' pupils and uses systems to identify needs and facilitate early intervention where necessary - thus responding to the needs, fears and anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner
- Scoil Ghobnatan recognises the need to work in partnership with and keep parents informed on procedures to improve relationships within the school community
- We recognise the right of parents to share in the task of equipping pupils with a range of life skills
- Staff members share a collegiate responsibility, under the direction of the Principal, to act in preventing bullying/aggressive behaviour by any member of the school community

(b) Effective leadership

- The BOM has overall responsibility to ensure that this policy is effective, sustainable and measured. The BOM must ensure accountability if of the highest standard and frequently appraise the outcomes of the strategies and measures contained within the policy
- ISM Team have a clear role to act in a leadership capacity within the school community, stimulating a whole school approach to preventing and tackling bullying and modelling best practice
- The Principal of Scoil Ghobnatan as key leader strongly influences attitudes and sets standards in relation to dealing with bullying
- Teachers act as good role models and are fair, clear and consistent in their disciplinary measures

(c) A School wide approach

- A whole community approach to the problem of bullying is required and Scoil Ghobnatan's community comprises of management, teachers, S.N.A's, ancillary staff, pupils, parents/guardians and the wider community
- Beyond the school community, bullying behaviour may extend to outside of school. Where this negatively impacts on a school - parents and pupils have a responsibility to support the school in helping to address the issue. This applies particularly (but not exclusively) to cyber bullying.
- The assistance of Gardaí, Tusla and Community workers may be required in some cases
- Collective vigilance is needed throughout the whole school/community sector to identify and deal with issues around bullying in a fair and equitable manner

(d) A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact

- Scoil Ghobnatan endeavours to put in place appropriate systems to ensure all relevant members of the school community (parents, pupils, staff and wider community) have a shared understanding of what constitutes bullying behaviour as defined in this policy (*Section 2 & 3 of Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools*)

(e) Implementation of education and prevention strategies see section 5 of this policy (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

(f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils

- Staff members have a distinct responsibility to ensure that supervision of pupils in class is effective and consistent
- Supervision in playground areas must be managed and conducted effectively

(g) Supports for staff

- Regular discussion and review of policy and procedures is essential to support staff on a continuous basis
- All staff must have a uniform interpretation of what is expected in relation to bullying, how to identify possible bullying behaviours, how to manage disclosures and to deal effectively with incidents of bullying within the classroom context
- Staff must be aware that supporting one another is a key aspect of prevention and new members of staff must be given every opportunity to discuss concerns and model best practice
- CPD in relation to Anti Bullying Strategies will be supported and encouraged for all members of staff

(h) Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour and

(i) 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, ethnic bullying 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 the definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

Bullying Behaviours which Scoil Ghobnatan has identified as relevant to our context:

General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying:

- Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g. sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc.
- Physical aggression
- Damage to property
- Name calling
- The production, display, or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person
- Offensive graffiti
- Extortion
- Intimidation
- Insulting or offensive gestures
- Invasion of personal space
- A combination of any of the types lists

Cyber:

- **Denigration:** spreading rumours, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation
- **Harassment:** continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages under another person's name
- **Trickery:** fooling someone into sharing personal information which you can then post online

- **Outing:** posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images
- **Exclusion:** purposely excluding someone from an online group
- **Cyber stalking:** ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety
- Silent phone calls
- Abusive phone calls
- Abusive text messages
- Abusive e mail
- Abusive communication on social networks.

Identity Based Behaviours - including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community).

Homophobic and Transgender:

- Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation
- Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation
- Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian...used in a derogatory manner
- Physical intimidation or attacks
- Threats

Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community:

- Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background
- Exclusion on the basis of any of the above

Relational; this involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:

- malicious gossip
- isolation and exclusion
- ignoring
- spreading rumours

Sexual:

- unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching
- harassment

Special Education Needs, Disability:

- name calling
- taunting others because of their disability or learning needs
- taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying and to understand social situations and social cues
- mimicking a person's disability
- setting others up for ridicule

4. The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying in accordance with the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools - section 6:7.6, 6:7.7 - are as follows:

- Principal
- Deputy Principal
- All class teachers.

5. The following education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber bullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying) will be used by Scoil Ghobnatan (Ref: Section 6.5 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary):

Education and prevention strategies:

School wide approach

- A school wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community
- The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereo-typing and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour
- The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Pupils will be provided with

opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.

- Whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develops an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils lives and the need to respond to it - prevention and intervention
- School wide awareness raising on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parents/guardians and the wider school community
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school
- The school's anti bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parents/guardians are encouraged to view our policy on the school's website
- 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
- Ensuring 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
 - make a phone call to the school
 - get a parent/guardian to tell on your behalf
 - ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place
- The development of an Acceptable Use Policy in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored

Implementation of curricula

- The full implementation of the SPHE and the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes Eg. Roots of Empathy

- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes at primary level. These lessons delivered by Community Gardaí, cover issues around personal safety
- The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately

6. Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying (Ref. 6.8.9 of the Anti-Bullying procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools)

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 apportion blame);

The school's procedures must be consistent with the following approach. Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parents/guardians) understand this approach from the outset.

Reporting Bullying Behaviour

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, S.N.A's, taxi escorts, caretakers, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher
- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the relevant teacher will exercise her/his professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
- Parent(s)/guardians(s) 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;

- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach
- Where possible incidents should be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
- All interviews should 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 should seek answers to questions of what, when, where, who and why.
- If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for their account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements;
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after the interview by the teacher;
- 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 parent(s)/guardians(s) of the parties involved should 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 should give parents/guardians an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the pupils;
- Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to them that they are in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get them to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;
- It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents/guardians) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, their parents/guardians and the school.

Follow up and recording

- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must as part of their 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 practicable
- Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable
- Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents/guardians or the school Principal or Deputy Principal
- 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.
- Where a parent/guardian is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents/guardians must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures
- In the event that a parent/guardian has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents/guardians to their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Recording of bullying behaviour

It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner.

The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

Informal pre-determination that bullying has occurred

- All incidents of bullying must be reported to the relevant teacher
- While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher

must keep a written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same

- The relevant teacher must inform the principal of all incidents being investigated
- All records must be kept under lock and key in the principal's office

Formal Stage 1 - determination that bullying has occurred

- 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 practicable, the relationships of the parties involved

The relevant teacher must use the recording template at **Appendix 3** to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

- a) in cases where he/she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred
- b) where the school has decided as part of its anti-bullying policy that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable

In each of the circumstances at (a) and (b) above, the recording template at **Appendix 3** must be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal/Deputy Principal as applicable. All records will be kept in a secure place under lock and key. It should also be noted that the timeline for recording bullying behaviour in the recording template at **Appendix 3** does not in any way preclude the relevant teacher from consulting the Principal/Deputy Principal at an earlier stage in relation to a case.

Formal Stage 2:

Established intervention strategies

- Teacher interviews with all pupils
- Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process
- Working with parent/guardian to support school interventions
- No blame approach
- Circle Time

7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows (ref 6:8:16 of Procedures)

- All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for all pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience eg.
 - SPHE lessons
 - Stay Safe Programme
 - Walk Tall
 - NEPS Programmes on www.neps.ie
- If pupils require counselling for further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. NEPS will also be contacted for advice.

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

- There are agreed supervision and monitoring practices in the school
- Mobile phones are to be switched off and kept in children's bags
- In relation to Acceptable Use Policy in the school all internet sessions are supervised by a teacher

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 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 at a meeting held on 11th of May 2022.

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and is readily accessible to parents and pupils on request and provided to the Parents Support Group. 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 and be readily accessible to parents and pupils on request. A record of the review and its outcomes will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: James Stanton
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed :Donal O' Shea
(Principal)

Date: 11th of May 2022

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