Scoil na Croise Naofa, Mahon
Anti-Bullying Policy

Introduction

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 na Croise Naofa 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.

Key Principals in Preventing Bullying 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:

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
- Has effective leadership
- Has a school-wide approach
- Implements 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.
- Has effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
- Has supports for staff
- Consistently records, investigates and follows up bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and
- Regularly evaluates the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy

Definition of Bullying

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

<u>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.</u>

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 that 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.

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 the pupil 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, 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.

- **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 a physical appearance, e.g., size of 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, schoolbooks and other learning material or interference with a pupil's locker or 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.

- **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.

Relevant Teacher

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

A pupil or parent may bring a bullying concern to any teacher in the school. Individual teachers must take appropriate measures regarding reports of bullying behaviour in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy.

In this policy the member of teaching staff who has responsibility for investigating and dealing with bullying is referred to as the "relevant teacher". At primary level, the relevant teacher will normally be the class teacher.

Education & Prevention Strategies

The education and prevention strategies that will be used by the school are as follows:
- The SPHE curriculum.
- The Stay Safe Programme.
- The Incredible Years Programme.
- Curricular and extracurricular activities that will enhance the self- esteem of pupils and give them a positive sense of self-worth.
- Awareness raising programmes of bullying including cyber bullying.
- Respectful and sincere inclusion of children presenting with special needs and of children from ethnic minorities.
- Classes that cultivate a school culture of respect and inclusiveness.
- Classes that promote empathy resilience and appropriate social skills among pupils.
- Display in class of class rules devised by the pupils and teacher.
- Consistency among staff in their management of pupils.

Procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying

i. 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 practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame).
ii. In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
iii. All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. 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.

iv. Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must be encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

v. Parents 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.

vi. It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach for the outset.

vii. Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents;

viii. Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved. However the issue may need to be addressed at full class level should the need arise.

ix. 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.

x. When analysing incidents of bully behaviour, the relevant teacher should 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.

xi. 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 his/her 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 they may face them from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher.

xii. It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s).

xiii. In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents 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 an opportunity of discussing ways in which they reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils.

Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;

xiv. It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school;

xv. 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. This can have a therapeutic effect.

xvi. 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 by the relevant teacher in the recoding template.

xvii. 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:

- Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;

- Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far is practicable;
- Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far is practicable; and
- Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal;

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.

Procedures for recording bullying behaviour:
The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour must adhere to the following:

i. While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher will use his/her professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same;

ii. 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 is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

iii. The relevant teacher must use the recording template to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:
   a) In cases where he/she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred; and

   b) Where the school has decided as part of its anti-bullying policy that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

In each of the circumstance at (a) and (b) above, the recording template must be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable. The recording template will be stored in the pupil's file in the secretary's office. It should also be noted that the timeline for recording bullying behaviour in the recording template does not in any way preclude the relevant teacher from consulting the Principal or Deputy Principal at an earlier stage in relation to a case.

Supports for pupils affected by bullying:
A programme of support for pupils who have been bullied must be in place. Such pupils may need opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed.

A programme of support for those pupils involved in bullying behaviour must also be part of the school's intervention process. Pupils involved in bullying behaviour need assistance on an ongoing basis. For those with low self-esteem, opportunities should be developed to increase feelings of self-worth. It is, therefore, important that the learning strategies applied within the school allow for the enhancement of the pupil's self-worth. Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may need help to learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.

Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour should be encouraged to discuss them with teachers.

Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils

The Board of Management confirms that, in Scoil na Croise Naofa, 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

Scoil na Croise Naofa 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
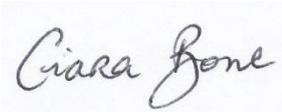
1. Gender including transgender,
2. Civil status
3. Family status
4. Sexual orientation
5. Religion
6. Age
7. Disability
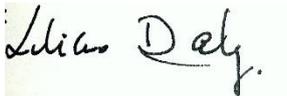8. Race
9. Membership of the Traveller community.

Implementation, Review and Communication

This policy was first ratified by the Board of Management of Scoil na Croise Naofa on December 9th 2013. This policy is made available to school personnel, published on the school website, is readily accessible to parents and pupils on request, and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

The Board of Management will review this policy and its implementation once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, parent, and pupils on request. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Next Review Date: June 2021

Signed: Ciara Bone   (Principal)   07/06/2020

Signed: Lilian Daly   (Chairperson B.o.M.)   07/06/2020