

Board of Management

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Anti-Bullying Policy

1. This Anti-bullying policy has been adopted in accordance with Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying which was published in 2022. This action plan builds on the Action Plan on Bullying published in 2013, which was on what our previous plan was based.
2. The aim of this plan is to take a whole education approach to address bullying, one which emphasises prevention, support, oversight and community. It also ensures that the individual is both valued and celebrated in schools.
3. The Board of Management recognises that bullying interferes with the rights of the child and the implementation of the actions in this plan will help our children grow up in a society where these rights are protected.
4. This plan has drawn on the Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2019, UNESCO whole education approach and best practice. It is rooted in the four following principles:
 - Prevention: Through the generation of empathy and the provision of training which provides a foundation for knowledge, respect, equality and inclusion.
 - Support: Tangible and targeted supports based on a continuum of needs which provide a framework for school communities to work together.
 - Oversight: Visible leadership creates positive environments for children and young people and all members of our school community.
 - Community: Building inclusive school communities that are connected to society, and that support and nurture positive relationships and partnerships.

5. Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying is aimed at helping us all to work together towards a diverse, inclusive Irish society, free from bullying in all its forms and where individual difference is valued, nurtured and celebrated and where all our children and young people can feel happy and safe in our schools. These are grouped into the four key areas for wellbeing promotion:

- Culture and Environment
- Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)
- Policy and Planning
- Relationships and Partnerships

These four areas outline the prevention strategies in place

1. Culture and Environment

Objective: To create a positive and inclusive school culture and environment which provides a space where children, young people and staff experience a sense of belonging and feel safe, connected and supported.

- Welcoming school community that has a culture of promoting inclusion, diversity and zero tolerance to bullying
Inclusion policy, Multi-cultural board, Inter-cultural day, inclusive class readers and library books representing diversity
- 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 stereotyping 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.
- Access to safe places in school both internal and external
Sensory room and Chill Out Rooms in Coisceimeanna, Chill Area in mainstream school, benches on yard, some classes have tents/quiet spaces
- Supports available for students and staff
Employee Assistance Service (EAS), Wellbeing as our School Self Evaluation Plan
Following NEPS advice where available for students and staff.
- Prevent bullying instead of simply reacting
Anti bullying policy, friendship week, SPHE lessons
- Raising awareness of bullying and the impact of bullying
Anti bullying policy and SPHE lessons
- Staff will model behaviour showing the ethical values based on respect, integrity, care and trust
- Pastoral theme of the month.

- acknowledges the right of each member of the school to enjoy school in a secure environment.
- acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual and his/her worth as a human being.
- promotes positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among all its members.
- prohibits vulgar, offensive, sectarian or other aggressive behaviour or language by any of its members.
- has a clear commitment to promoting equity in general and gender equity in particular in all aspect of its functioning.
- has the capacity to change in response to pupils' needs.
- Charter in age-appropriate language to outline school culture and values and how to prevent bullying.

Scoil Bhíde Culture and Values by Student Council

- Everyone is kind.
- Everyone is friendly and says hello to each other.
- We are all happy for each other.
- Everyone does lots of things they like and has lots of interests.

2. Curriculum

Objective:

To ensure an inclusive and supportive curriculum for our children and young people with training and development for all school staff which provides consistent support and opportunities for inclusive learning and empathy generation.

- Inclusive curriculum with an emphasis on diversity and respect for other cultures, anti-racism
Multi-cultural board, Inter-Cultural day, class readers and library books to depict diversity, integrate with History, Geography and PLC learning about other cultures
- Focus on inclusion, equality and diversity and additional CPD for teachers to be sought.
- Building teacher skills to prevent and address bullying.
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 its' prevention and intervention.
An annual audit of professional development needs with a view to assessing staff requirements through internal staff knowledge/expertise and external sources
Professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teacher(s) where available
Restorative Practice training was planned for this year, however was rescheduled due to substitution shortages and PDST facilitators covering. Have tried to book in for September 2023
Dec 2017 Stay Safe, September 2018 Weaving Wellbeing

- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community.
- Evidence based Anti-bullying programmes taught
RSE, Stay Safe, Walk Tall and Weaving Wellbeing Programmes.
School wide delivery of lessons on **Cyber Bullying**
Web wise Primary teachers' resources and FUSE programme for 4th-6th class.
Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes at primary level. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardai, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying.
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.
- Books and lessons which reinforce messages of inclusivity and equality
Class readers now depict a more diverse class in the pictures and by the childrens names used. We are looking at purchasing more literature to continue building on our diversity and inclusion resources.
- identifies aspects of the curriculum through which positive and lasting influences can be exerted towards forming pupils' attitudes and values.

3. Policy and Planning

Objective:

To develop and implement adaptive and responsive policies and planning where children and young people, their families, education partners and key stakeholders are active participants working together with Government to prevent and address bullying in Irish schools.

- Inclusive approaches to school policy development
We get student voice through the Student Council for this policy and the pupil wellbeing survey for the Wellbeing Policy and School Improvement Plan
- The development of a range of effective approaches within schools to enable the safe reporting of bullying behaviour, including anonymity in reporting
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 will 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.
 - Get a parent or guardian to tell.
 - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- The need for reporting of all alleged bullying incidents, including details of the type of bullying behaviour and the approach to addressing it.
- Identify clear protocols to encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) 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.

- The importance of school staff being trained to implement a range of appropriate responses to alleged bullying behaviour
- The importance of regular review of school policies
Anti-bullying policy is reviewed yearly
- The importance of school policies setting out clearly and accessibly the roles and responsibilities of each member of the school community ensuring that information is also presented in age appropriate and child friendly language
- The value of the School Self Evaluation process for wellbeing promotion
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tour. 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 in accordance with the acceptable use policy.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils. It is available on the school website as part of the code of behaviour for current and prospective parent(s)/guardian(s).
- The implementation of per term whole school awareness of the Anti-Bullying Policy. Reference to anti-bullying strategies and appropriate behaviours are made during the morning assembly by the principal/deputy.
- The Acceptable Use Policy in the school includes the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored, as is the pupils' use of mobile phones.

Links to other policies

- Code of Behaviour
- Child Safeguarding Statement and Risk Assessment.
- Assembly and Dismissal
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Attendance Policy
- Anti-Cyber Bullying Policy
- Special Education Needs Policy
- S.P.H.E Policy
- R.S.E Policy
- Religion Policy
- Data Protection Policy
- Mobile Phone and Digital Device Policy
- Inclusion Policy

4. Relationships and Partnerships

Objective:

To promote the development of relationships and partnerships between children and young people, their families and the school community which enhance our networks and understanding of each other's experiences in Irish society.

- The importance of positive relationships across the whole school community to promote empathy, understanding and respect and raise awareness of unconscious bias.
- The importance of all school staff keeping a ‘watchful eye’ on the children and young people in their care with all school staff being confident in their knowledge of best practice in how to address bullying behaviour
- The importance of a trusted adult in relation to disclosure of incidents of bullying
- The meaningful involvement of children and young people
- The importance of engagement with parents in recognition of their key role in preventing and addressing bullying
- The benefits of encouraging greater diversity of involvement across the whole school community, including student councils and school staff
 - takes particular care of “at risk” pupils and uses its monitoring system to facilitate early intervention where necessary and it responds to the needs, fears or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner.
 - recognises the need to work in partnership with and keep parents informed on procedures to improve relationships on a school-wide basis.
 - recognises the role of parents in equipping the pupil with a range of life skills.
 - recognises the role of other community agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying.
 - promotes habits of mutual respect, courtesy, and an awareness of the interdependence of people in groups and communities.
 - promotes qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among all its members both in school and out of school.
 - 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.

What is bullying?

According to Cineáltas, bullying is targeted behaviour, online or offline, that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society.

The three core elements of the definition are further described as:

- Targeted behaviour

Bullying is deliberate, unwanted behaviour that causes harm to others, and where the child or young person displaying bullying behaviour knows that their behaviour is or will be perceived as harmful by the child or young person experiencing the behaviour.

Bullying is not accidental or reckless behaviour. The harm can be physical (personal injury, damage to or loss of property), social (withdrawal, loneliness, exclusion) and/or emotional (for example low self-esteem, depression, anxiety). If the repeated harm is real for the child or young person experiencing the behaviour but unintended by the other child or young person, this is not bullying but, importantly, must still be addressed under the school’s code of behaviour.

- Repeated behaviour

Bullying takes the form of a systematic pattern of behaviour which is repeated over time. Single offline incidents of intentional negative behaviour involving an imbalance of power are not considered bullying, but must still be addressed under the school's code of behaviour. Posting a single harmful message/image/video online which is highly likely to be reposted or shared with others can however be seen as bullying behaviour.

- Imbalance of power

In incidents of bullying, the child or young person experiencing the bullying behaviour finds it hard to defend themselves as a result of the abuse of a real or perceived imbalance of power. This imbalance of power may manifest itself through differences in size, strength, age, ability, peer group power, economic status, social status, religion, race, ethnic origin, sexual orientation, family circumstances, gender, gender identity, gender expression, experience of the care system, disability or the receipt of special education. In incidents of online (or cyber) bullying, the imbalance of power may relate to online anonymity, technical proficiency and possession of information/images/video, and the inability of the targeted person to remove offensive online material or escape the bullying.

Examples of bullying behaviours	
General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • Slagging • 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 • The "look" • Invasion of personal space • A combination of any of the types listed. • Exclusion
Cyber	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denigration: Spreading rumors, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation • Harassment: Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual • Impersonation: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name • Flaming: Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provoke an online fight

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trickery: Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online • Outing: Posting or sharing confidential or compromising information or images • Exclusion: Purposefully excluding someone from an online group • Cyber stalking: Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety • Silent telephone/mobile phone call • Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls • Abusive text messages • Abusive email • Abusive communication on social networks e.g. Snapchat, Instagram, WhatsApp, Facebook/Ask.fm/ Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles • Unwanted negative behaviour, including exclusion, when using group chat on any social media or games console. • Encouraging others to send or share negative posts to others. • Sexting: Sending or receiving sexually explicit photos or videos by text or message or other digital technologies. Posting, viewing, or sharing inappropriate images of oneself or others. • Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures • Abusive posts on any form of communication technology
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<p>This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malicious gossip • Isolation & exclusion • Ignoring • Excluding from the group • Taking someone's friends away • "Bitching" • Spreading rumours

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breaking confidence • Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear • The “look” • Use or terminology such as ‘nerd’ in a derogatory way
Sexual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching • Harassment • Sexting
Special Educational Needs, Disability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 • Taking advantage of some pupils’ vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues. • Mimicking a person’s disability • Setting others up for ridicule

The Relevant Teachers in this School are:

- All teachers.

Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

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);

The following is the approach which will be taken:

Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s)) understand this approach from the outset.

Reporting bullying behaviour

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to the notice of any teacher in the school.
- All reports will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretary, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus drivers, caretaker, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, to the relevant teacher;

Investigating and dealing with incidents

In investigating and dealing with bullying, the (relevant)teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;

- Parent(s)/guardian(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 will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach;
- Where possible incidents will be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
- All interviews will 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 will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This will be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner;
- If a group is involved, each member may be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved may be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member will 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 will be supported through the possible pressures that may face him/her 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 his/her account of the incident(s)
- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the parties involved may 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 may give parent(s)/guardian(s) 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 will be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts will be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;
- Where the bullying has not ceased the matter will be dealt with under the school's Code of Behaviour
- Serious incidents of bullying will be reported to Tusla under the School Child Safeguarding Statement and Child Protection Procedures 2017
- It will also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parent(s)/guardian(s)) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) 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 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 is practicable;
 - Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable;
 - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardian(s) or the school Principal or Deputy Principal

- **Restorative approach**

Staff may use the following questions to investigate an incident:

What happened?

What were you thinking of at the time?

What have you thought about it since?

Who has been affected and in what way?

How could things have been done differently?

What do you think needs to happen next?

These questions may be used in a restorative circle with a number of children and staff participating.

- 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(s)/guardian(s) to support school interventions
- No Blame Approach
- Circle Time
- Implementing sociogram questionnaires
- The traditional disciplinary approach
- Strengthening the victim

School's Programme of Support

- All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience e.g.
 - Pastoral care system
 - Buddy / Peer mentoring system
 - Group work such as circle time
- If pupils require counselling of further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with NEPS, HSE and other appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.
- Pupils are taught to understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.
- The student council were asked to give any suggestions they might have on the schools anti-bullying policy. They came up with the following suggestions:
 - a) Have a rainbow coloured buddy bench on the yard so if your friends are out you can sit on it and someone will ask you to play.
 - b) Move seats more often in the classroom so you get a chance to become friends with more people.
 - c) Promote kindness in the yard e.g. asking people if they are OK if they fall over.

- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved may 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(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
- In the event that a parent(s)/guardian(s) has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of 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 staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. Teachers record all incidences and keep their own incident book. All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher
- All 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.

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 is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.
- The school will provide a file in a locked filing cabinet in the Principals office for the storage of all records retained by the relevant teacher.

Formal Stage 2-Appendix 3 (From DES Procedures):

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

a) 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.

b) in cases where he/she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately rectified within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred; and

When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal in the filing cabinet in the principal's office.

Established intervention strategies

- Teacher interviews with all pupils

- d) Make it more well known that you can tell a teacher something anonymously so that other children don't call you a 'snitch'.
 - e) Create an area in the school e.g a noticeboard where children can write what their interests are. This way they can see other children who they have things in common with and make even more friends.
 - f) Encourage children once a week to play with someone they don't usually play with to encourage and promote wider friend groups.
 - g) Make sure children are supervised.
 - h) Make all children happy.
 - i) Include everyone so nobody is on their own.
- Parents Council suggestions
 - a) Put a box in corridor on the wall so that if someone who is being bullied or is reporting an incident does not feel comfortable approaching a teacher, they can leave a note in the box. Student Council can design the box.

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.

10. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 17.5.23.

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Council. 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 provided to the Parents' Council. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: *Kileen Glynn*
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: *Julie Dwyer*
(Principal)