

SCOIL SAN EOIN ANTI BULLYING POLICY



School Position on Bullying

In Scoil San Eoin, we believe that each pupil has a right to an education free from fear and intimidation. In school, we work towards standards of behaviour based on the basic principles of honesty, respect, consideration and responsibility. We operate using the motto "Treat others as you would like to be treated"

The school regards bullying as a serious infringement of individual rights and a threat to the self-esteem and self-confidence of targeted pupil(s), therefore it does not tolerate bullying of any kind. Every report of bullying is treated seriously and dealt with, having due regard for the well-being of the targeted pupil(s) and the perpetrator(s).

All staff members work towards an environment free from bullying. Should a bullying incident occur, we endeavour to intervene early, when and if necessary, and respond to situations in a sensitive and professional manner. Our aim would be to end the bullying, resolve the issues and restore relationships insofar as is practical.

- ❖ **Isolated incidents of aggressive/negative behaviour will be dealt with under the Code of Behaviour and would not be described as bullying (See definition)**

Introduction

This policy has been compiled and adopted by the staff and Board of Management of Scoil San Eoin, in accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the Code of Behaviour Guidelines issued by the NEWB. It is within the framework of the school's overall Code of Behaviour and the Child Protection Policy. This policy fully complies with the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools which were published in September 2013.

Aims

The staff and BOM of Scoil San Eoin recognise the serious nature of bullying and therefore are committed to the following principles of best practise in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

- To foster a school environment which:
 - a) Is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity
 - b) Encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour immediately in a non-threatening environment.
 - c) Promotes mutual and self-respect across the school community
- To implement and promote the use of education and preventative programmes such as Stay Safe, Walk Tall, Alive O, Circle Time and general SPHE lessons on topics such as cyber bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- To raise awareness and shared understanding of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, staff, pupils and parents/guardians.
- To develop procedures for noting and reporting incidents of bullying.
- To develop procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying and follow up procedures including the use of intervention strategies.
- To develop a programme of support for those affected by and involved in bullying behaviour and staff members.
- Promote good practices for all staff by implementing supports where possible e.g. effective supervision and monitoring of pupils especially due to restricted staff numbers
- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

Definition of Bullying

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

Unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted by the same individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

Other examples of bullying include:

- Deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying
- Cyber bullying
- Identity based bullying such as homophobic, racist, members of the Traveller community and bullying of those with a disability or special educational needs

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

As stated previously, negative behaviour that does not meet the above definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's Code of Behaviour and therefore the parent(s) involved may not need to be contacted in that instance.

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 may be regarded as bullying behaviour and will be dealt with appropriately. Negative behaviour that does not meet the definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's code of behaviour. The class teacher will use their discretion and may alert the parents/guardians.

INDICATIONS OF BULLYING

- Anxiety about travelling to/from school
- Unwillingness to go to school
- Deterioration of academic performance
- Pattern of physical illness
- Unexplained changes in mood/behaviour
- Visible signs of anxiety/distress
- Missing possessions
- Increased requests for money
- Unexplained bruising
- Reluctance to talk about what is troubling them

The areas where bullying can occur are:

- Pupil to pupil
- Teacher to pupil
- Parent to child
- Intra staff
- Parent to staff

The 3 parties involved in bullying are:

- The bully/bullies
- The victim/victims
- The witness/witnesses

The “relevant teachers” for investigating and dealing with bullying in this school are:

- Ms L Greene (Principal Teacher)
- Ms AM Nuzum (Vice-Principal Teacher)

Procedures 6.8.3 “At primary level, the relevant teacher will normally be the class teacher”

Education and Prevention Strategies

The education and prevention strategies used by the school on an ongoing basis are:

- The anti-bullying module of the SPHE programme, in conjunction with other modules such as conflict, communication etc. is undertaken as it applies, during each school year.
- The Stay- Safe Programme is undertaken to enhance the pupil's self-protection skills.
- The newly updated Walk Tall, RSE and Be Safe Programmes are also included in each teacher's Long Term Plans each year so as to make sure that all strands of the SPHE programme, including bullying are covered according to guidelines.
- Seminars have been attended by the Principal and a whole school SPHE/RSE policy and plan is in place.
- Teachers will make a conscious effort to include, in all curricular areas where possible, opportunities to promote the value of diversity and respect and address prejudice in particular homophobic and transphobic bullying (senior room)
- The school's Traffic Lights System as part of the Code of Behaviour encourages and rewards 'positive behaviour' through the use of the Green Card. Classroom and School rules will be revised regularly.
- A variety of awareness-raising exercises per school year for each class group/on a whole school basis proactively explaining the nature and variety, causes and consequences and unacceptability of bullying. This also involves strategies to engage pupils in addressing problems when they arise. These strategies will aim to build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils and are completed in a calm rational way outside of the tense context of a particular bullying incident. (www.antibullyingcampaign.ie)
- The school staff and parents (through the Parents Reps), through a variety of presentations and other exercises throughout the year, are made aware of the nature of bullying and the signs that might indicate that a pupil is being bullied. They are encouraged to watch out for signs and report anything to the relevant teacher.

- Through the school website and meetings with parents/guardians and the P. Reps, all are regularly informed of any activities in connection with anti-bullying that occur within the team and are encouraged to support these in any way they can.
- A bi-annual ' Friendship Week'

Education and Prevention Strategies

- An annual lesson on cyber bullying to be included in each teacher's long-term plans from 3rd -6th class.
- All SEN teachers will link in to all activities with particular attention being paid to the needs of all SEN pupils. They will also be involved in explicit teaching for SEN pupils where applicable. Approaches to decreasing the likelihood of bullying for pupils with SEN including improving inclusion, focusing on developing social skills and paying attention to key moments such as transitioning from primary to post-primary.

Procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying and intervention strategies for dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour

The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are outlined below.

If the incident is deemed by the relevant teacher to be considered as bullying or suspected bullying behaviour, and it cannot be dealt with under the Code of Behaviour, the following steps will apply:

1. The relevant teacher gathers as much evidence and information as possible at the time and records it on the '**Negative Behaviour Report Form**', and/or Aladdin. Parents will also be notified, through a **standardised notice slip/email** that an incident has occurred and the relevant teacher is investigating it.
2. Any member of staff who is not the relevant teacher, but is the first point of contact during an incident, will inform the relevant teacher immediately of all known information on the incident. This also applies if an incident is reported by a parent/guardian. This will be recorded in the 'Negative Behaviour Report Form' and/or Aladdin.

3. The relevant teacher will investigate the matter thoroughly and record all information, using some or all of the following procedures:
- **Pupil Reflection Sheet** – The school reserves the right to ask any pupil to write an account of what happened, as part of an investigation. This does not necessarily imply that a pupil is guilty of misbehaviour
 - Pupil(s) who are alleged to be involved in misbehaviour are interviewed by the relevant teacher to establish the nature and extent of the behaviour and any reasons for it.
 - If this is the first time these pupils have been involved in an incident, the relevant teacher does not apportion blame but rather treats bullying behaviour as a “mistake” that can and must be remedied. The intention at this stage is to talk to those involved and to seek a promise that it will stop. If that promise is honoured there will be no penalty. All pupils involved in the negative behaviour will be asked to sign a **binding promise** that they will treat all other pupils in the school, including those involved in this incident, equally, fairly and respectfully. It is left to the relevant teacher’s professional judgement as to whether a meeting of all parties is merited at the stage.
 - If after 14 days since the incident was reported/occurred the relevant teacher considers the matter to be dealt with, and no further issues of bullying have occurred, they will put together a file (either paper or via Aladdin) including all the findings of the investigation and other relevant documents and/or information. All documentation will be retained securely in the office.

Procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying and intervention strategies for dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour

If a pupil has signed a promise but then chooses to break that promise and continue the bullying behaviour, within 14 days of the initial incident/report, then this can no longer be considered a “mistake”.

- In this event, the relevant teacher will fill out Appendix 3 and submit it to the principal and parents/guardians (and/or appropriate agencies) will be contacted again and asked to attend a meeting. This will include the relevant teacher and/or Principal, parent/guardian/relevant agencies SEN teacher (if applicable), pupil and Chairperson of BOM (if applicable). This is to see if this group, especially the parent/guardian may be able to assist in stopping the incident occurring again.
- At this stage, a sanction will be imposed by the school in line with the school Code of Behaviour, and **another promise** will be signed by the pupil and parent/guardian similar to the previous one.
- A review meeting will be scheduled for 14 days after the initial meeting.
- If after 14 days, if there has been no further bullying behaviour, the situation will be finalised at this meeting and all further documentation will be filed.
- If after 14 days, the relevant teacher considers that there have been further incidents of bullying behaviour by the pupil, the parents/guardians will be informed that a meeting of the Board of Management will be called and the matter will be handed over to their authority. The pupil may be suspended or expelled from the school.
- Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with the Anti-bullying procedures 2013, the parents will 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 will advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children

Programme of Support

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:

- Bullied pupils:
 - Ending the bullying behaviour,
 - Changing the school culture to foster more respect for bullied pupils and all pupils,
 - Changing the school culture to foster greater empathy towards and support for bullied pupils,
 - Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the awareness-raising programme,
 - Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the speedy identification of those responsible and speedy resolution of bullying situations,
 - Helping bullied pupils raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school).
 - Introduction of the Weaving Wellbeing programme which encourages self-confidence, awareness of emotions and feelings and also empathy towards others.

- Bullying pupils:
 - Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are not blamed or punished and get a "clean sheet,"
 - Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are doing the right and honourable thing and giving them praise for this,
 - Helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school),
 - Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils' feelings of self-worth,
 - In dealing with negative behaviour in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child,
 - In dealing with bullying behaviour seeking resolution and offering a fresh start with a "clean sheet" and no blame in return for keeping a promise to reform.

Supervision and Monitoring

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.

The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps as 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.

Implementation Date


This policy was compiled in January 2015 and is reviewed annually. The policy was presented to the staff and Board of Management of Scoil San Eoin. It was ratified by the Board of Management on _____.

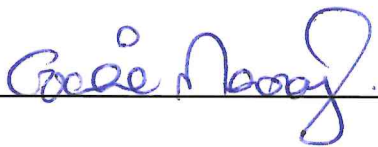
Review and Communication

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management annually. Notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel and readily accessible to parents and pupils on request. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills and to the patron if requested.

Ratification of Policy

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 26/9/23

Signed:  (Principal) Date: 26/9/23

Signed:  (Chairperson) Date: 26/9/23