

Anti-Bullying Policy

Naomh Mhuire N.S., Walsh Island



Template I

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 Naomh Mhuire NS, Walsh Island 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 PostPrimary 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 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;
 - 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 o explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic 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
 - On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

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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
- 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 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 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 AntiBullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

4, The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:

All incidents of bullying behaviour in Naomh Mhuire NS will be investigated and dealt with by the teachers.

Serious cases of bullying behaviour by pupils are referred immediately to the Principal Ms. Kerin and/or the Deputy Principal Ms Fullam (Or the person Acting in their position). Where an incident of bullying behaviour is suspected, Ms. Fullam and the Principal Ms. Kerin will be informed

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5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:

- Naomh Mhuire NS will use a range of positive strategies to encourage good behaviour and relationships between pupils, which will serve to deter potential bullying:

- The range of rewards and sanctions outlined in our Code of Behaviour will be used, especially the methods of promoting good behaviour. ■ All staff are identified to the pupils as adults in whom they can confide. Pupils are frequently reminded that they can approach staff freely at any time to discuss any problems.

- Teachers are explicitly teaching about bullying in classrooms through the SPHE curriculum and programmes such as 'Stay Safe', 'RSE', 'Walk Tall', 'WebWise', 'Safe search', 'Offaly Libraries Internet safety courses' etc.
- Classes engage in activities to promote inclusivity and acceptance of all
- Good visual anti bullying reminders in classrooms and shared spaces such as corridors.
- Training has been offered and provided for teachers and parents on internet safety and appropriate use of internet and devices.
- We provide opportunities for children to feedback anonymously to teachers through worry boxes etc.
- Participated in the Pieta Amber Flag Initiative which creates healthy, inclusive environments that support mental well-being.

Pupils and staff will continue to reflect on the effectiveness of this and all support systems through the frequent use of Circle Time or SPHE activities and discussions in class, we take into consideration the views of the pupil/pupils.

Where the frequency or severity of incidents raises a cause for concern the necessary action in line with our Code Behaviour will be initiated.

Specific measures to reduce the risk of Bullying include:

- Security of the school building at playtimes, especially to ensure that no pupil is allowed inside the building without supervision.
- Issues to be brought to the attention of the Principal Ms Kerin and the Deputy Principal Ms Fullam.
- All reported incidents are considered with a view to future prevention.



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6. 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 as follows:

Procedures for Noting, Reporting and Recording an incident of Bullying Behaviour

Teachers on daily supervision and duty at break times are supported by the Principal and Deputy Principal for reporting, recording and following up any incidents or concerns. In particular teachers are ready to supervise any pupil who is upset or in need of a 'cooling off' period or to follow through on any disciplinary action. The teacher on duty reports any serious incident or injury to the Principal and/or Deputy Principal and these are recorded and followed up where necessary.

- All incidents of bullying behaviour in Naomh Mhuire NS will be investigated and dealt with by the teachers.
- Serious cases of bullying behaviour by pupils are referred immediately to the Principal Ms. Kerin and/or the Deputy Principal Ms Fullam.
- Parents of victims and bullies will be informed earlier rather than later of incidents;
- It is made clear to pupils that when they report incidents of bullying behaviour, they are not telling tales but behaving responsibly. It is important to counteract a culture, which may associate 'telling' with 'informing'.
- Records of incidents will be filled in on Template 3 by teachers involved and collated by the Principal.

Procedures for investigating and dealing with Bullying Behaviour

When investigating incidents of bullying behaviour, it is necessary to:

- Listen
 - Seek answers to the questions of what, when, where, who and why? from both parties. A copy of this report will be kept in the file of the pupil and/or pupils who have engaged in bullying behaviour and in the file of the pupil who has been bullied.
 - Reassure the person reporting.
 - Ensure the pupil's safety
 - Discuss confidentiality for both parties.
 - Tell the pupil that he/she will be kept informed.
 - Talk to the other pupil involved.
 - Make an intervention.



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Where the incident of bullying behaviour is suspected, Ms. Fullam and Ms. Kerin will be informed. The intervention will involve the following procedure:

- Ms Fullam will carry out investigation with all parties ensuring that each has equal hearing; • if appropriate, the school will inform the parents/guardians of all parties involved in the incident(s); • if necessary, bring the parties together in order to form a resolution/action plan to end the bullying behaviour and ensure that no pupil will be placed in a situation in front of external parties without equal support of the parent/guardian.

Procedures for follow-up of an incident of Bullying Behaviour

Ms. Fullam will make an assessment about what happened and will convey the outcome to the class teacher, to the Principal and to the pupils and parents concerned(both parties). If a pupil or pupils are found to be involved in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear that they are in breach of the Code of Behaviour and sanctions will be imposed. In cases where it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, in accordance with the above definition, Ms Fullam and Ms Kerin will meet with the parents/guardians of the two parties involved, separately, as appropriate to:

- Explain the action being taken and the reason for it
- Discuss ways in which the parents/guardians can reinforce and support the actions being taken by our school.

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

- Low self-esteem is an attribute which victims and bullies share. It is necessary, therefore, to avail of opportunities to increase feelings of self-worth among victims and bullies. Victims may need counselling to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem and bullies may need counselling to help them understand and learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others. Each incident and the pupils involved will be treated sensitively, and, in consultation with all parties, follow-up work with Ms Fullam will be provided, or where necessary, further referral with outside professionals.
- Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour should be encouraged to discuss them with their teachers.
- Bullying is a societal problem and a whole community approach is needed to combat bullying behaviour. The school, as a community is made up of management, teachers, SNAs, pupils and parents and the promotion of home/school links is a vital element in the countering of bullying behaviour.

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The school's Anti-Bullying code is discussed regularly in each class and explained to the pupils.

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. 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. Ratification and Adoption

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on October 13th 2021.

It was transferred to new Dept. of Education template without change to the details on November 12th 2021.

11. Availability and Circulation

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.

12. Review

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, be readily accessible to parents and pupils on request 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.

Signed: Sean Healy
(Chairperson of BOM)

Signed: Cathiona Kerin
(Principal)

Reviewed: 10th Oct 2023

The policy be reviewed annually at the start of the school year.