



Scoil Mhuire, Horeswood,

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 Mhuire** has **adopted the following Anti-Bullying Policy** within the framework of the school's overall **Code of Behaviour** and is not a stand-alone 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. The full document can be accessed at www.education.ie

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;

Refer Table A (6.1.5.Procedures): Key elements of a positive school culture and climate, and also Appendix 2: Practical tips for building a school culture and climate.

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
- explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying;
- effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;

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.

Measures to embed these key principles in school practice are outlined throughout this 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, 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 *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

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
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
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 • 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. Facebook/Ask.fm/ Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles • Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures • Abusive posts on any form of communication technology
<p>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).</p>	
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
<p>This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:</p>	

Relational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Malicious gossip • Isolation & exclusion • Ignoring • Excluding from the group • Taking someone's friends away • "Bitching" • Spreading rumours • 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
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

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows:
(Refer Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):

A pupil or parent may bring a bullying concern to *any teacher* in the school. In the normal classroom context the *class teacher* is deemed the "relevant" teacher to take note of and follow up on the complaint. Teachers on supervision may be the initial point of contact and should pass on details to the class teacher. All teachers have copies of the *Template for recording bullying behaviour (Appendix 3 of Procedures)* .

Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows (see Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

School-wide approach

- A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community underpins the characteristic spirit of Scoil Mhuire .
- 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.

- Whole staff professional development on bullying behaviours to ensure that all staff develop an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it through 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
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) 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.
- Involvement of the student council in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Buddy system, mentoring, Lunchtime Pals and other student support activities that can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school-to be displayed publicly in classrooms and in common areas of the school.
- The school's anti-bullying policy will be regularly highlighted with pupils and all parent(s)/guardian(s)s will be given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school (included in the Enrolment Pack)
- 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, for example after class.
 - Hand note up with homework.
 - Make a phone call to the school or to a trusted teacher in the school.
 - Feelings box in classroom
 - Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
 - Administer a confidential questionnaire occasionally to pupils.
 - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- We will endeavour to ensure that parents understand and follow the policy procedures outlined in this document which are DES requirements , not guidelines, when dealing with bullying behaviours.
- The Acceptable Use Policy in the school includes the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored.

Implementation of curricula and specific skill-building programmes

- SPHE curriculum strands *Myself* (Self-identity strand unit) and *Myself and others* (My friends and other people/Relating to others strand units) across all classes
- **Stay Safe** programme throughout the school
- Use of www.webwise.ie for Internet safety lessons. School participation in designated *Safer Internet Day* . Mobile phones and personal electronic devices are not allowed in school. However, use of apps such as Viber Group texts and Facebook are widely used by children from 3rd class up outside of school and use on these may have follow-on repercussions in school. The school's role is one of raising awareness of the dangers of cyber-bullying and highlighting this to pupils and

parents. Parents have a primary responsibility in monitoring use of technology at home e.g. children need to be 13 to have a social profile.

- Clear teacher instructions on appropriate on-line behaviour when using ipads , laptops or classroom computers.
- Relationships and Sexuality Programme- Growing and Changing Strand in 6th class (the scope of the curriculum is clearly defined at primary level and does not include sexual orientation). Homophobic or trans-gender name –calling or associated comments are dealt with in the context of *Feelings and Emotions* and should be referred back to parents.
- Materials from www.antibullyingcampaign.ie
- A school wide awareness of being a “telling” school. A focus on positive behaviour in whole school assemblies
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes at primary level. These lessons, delivered by the Community Garda, 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. e.g. Socially Speaking/ Social Stories/Feelings cards/Walk Tall/Stay Safe

The following programmes have been introduced to Scoil Mhuire in recent years and are aimed at developing strategies and skills to help children deal with and respond to incidents and to help build resilience and positive self-image in pupils:

- **SMARTS** programme in Junior Infants. (The SMARTS programme is an early intervention, arts based, behavioural support programme developed to resolve simple behavioural challenges in a fun and positive environment.)
- **S.A.L.T.** Programme – 1st - 4th (The S.A.L.T. process is a conflict resolution process **Stop, Ask, Listen, Talk** -that children can use to help them handle their rows and disputes)
- **Friends for Life** – 4th and 5th classes (Training provided by NEPS (National Educational Psychological Service) The Friends for Life programme aims to help children develop resilience and positive life-coping skills so that they can deal with whatever life throws their way.

Links to other policies

- School policies, practices and activities that are particularly relevant to bullying, e.g. Code of Behaviour, Child Protection policy, Supervision of pupils, Acceptable Use policy, Attendance.

Supports for Staff

- The Board of Management, through the principal Brian Flood, will ensure that school staff have sufficient familiarity with the school’s anti bullying policy to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy when required. This will include all temporary and substitute staff.
- Continuous Professional Development (CPD) will be provided to up-skill teachers in programmes which might assist the school’s anti-bullying programme. The school will avail of Professional Development offered by the PDST support service

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 (Refer Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):

6.8.9. 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 school's procedures must be consistent with the following approach.

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 any teacher in the school.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher in line with the school's Code of Behaviour
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;

Investigating and dealing with incidents: Style of approach (see section 6.8.9)

- 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 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, 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;
- 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 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)/guardian(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 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 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 (Restorative Practice)
- It must 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.
- Disciplinary sanctions will reflect the school's Code of Behaviour up to and including suspension and expulsion. However, the guiding principle in dealing with bullying is that of changing behaviour in the person using bullying behaviour and building self-esteem/coping skills in those targeted by bullying behaviour.

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
- 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(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. While parents may feel strongly that their child is being subjected to bullying behaviour they need to allow the school to follow due process when reporting bullying behaviour.

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. Each teacher will have a designated Incident recording book. All incidents 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.

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.
- All records will be retained by the relevant teacher who will pass on the class Incident Recording Book to the principal at the end of the school year. These will be retained in storage for at least a year as a reference in the event of on-going patterns of behaviour.

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) 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.

The following are considered to fall into the above category:

- Serious physical assault with intent and causing deliberate injury
- Inappropriate use of sexual language directed intentionally at a child
- Sexual assault
- Abusive communication on social networks/ messaging apps
- Circulation of written words or pictures aimed at intimidation of another person
- Offensive graffiti on school property or grounds

When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal in her office. Information on the number of forms is passed on to the Board of Management . They will be retained as part of a pupil's record and may be alluded to in transfer of information to new schools.

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(s)/guardian(s) to support school interventions
- No Blame Approach
- Circle Time
- Restorative interviews
- Restorative conferencing

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7. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows
(Refer Section 6.8.16 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools)

- 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.
 - Classroom Code of respect
 - Buddy system
 - Group work such as circle time
- If pupils require counselling or further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. E.g. HSE, NEPS .This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.
- Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

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.(See Supervision policy)

The yard supervision rota has been amended to ensure senior class teachers supervise the senior yard and junior class teachers the junior yard as they teachers are more familiar with children within those classes. The senior duty teacher can use the "Permission to go in " notebook to record an incident if felt necessary. Professional judgement will be used by teachers on supervision to assess if an intentional bullying incident occurred or whether there is a simple dispute (e.g. over game rules) in which case Code of Behaviour practices are followed.

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. Parents should make an appointment if they need to discuss issues of concern and check in with the office on visiting the school.

10. This policy was reviewed by the Board of Management on May 31st 2023 .

11. This policy will forthwith be made available to school personnel, published on the school website www.scoilmhuirecampile.com and provided to the Parents' Association. 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' Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: Gerald O'Reilly (Chairperson of Board of Management) Signed: Abriea Good (Principal)

Date: 20-06-2023

Date: 20/6/2023

Date of next review: May 2024

