



Scoil Sheosaimh Naofa

BALLINAGAR, TULLAMORE, CO. OFFALY R35 RW26

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Anti-Bullying Policy

Rationale

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB (TUSLA), the Board of Management of Scoil Sheosaimh 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.

Children First National Guidance 2017 and the Anti-Bullying Procedures provide that in cases of serious instances of bullying where the behaviour is regarded as possibly abusive, a referral may need to be made to Tusla or An Garda Síochána as appropriate. Where school personnel have concerns about a child arising from alleged bullying behaviour but are not sure whether to report the matter to TUSLA, the designated liaison person shall seek advice from Tusla in accordance with the procedures set out in Chapter 5 of Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017.

Aims of this Policy:

1. To create a school ethos that encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
2. To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with school management, teachers, pupils and parents.
3. To ensure comprehensive supervision and monitoring measures through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation.
4. To develop procedures for noting and reporting incidents of bullying behaviour.
5. To devise prevention and education strategies to be used in the school.
6. To develop procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.

Link to School Ethos

Our school ethos states that Scoil Sheosaimh Naofa aims to promote the full and harmonious development of all aspects of the person of the pupil; intellectual, physical, cultural, moral and spiritual. Our ethos further states that we aim to provide a stable and happy learning environment for all our pupils and that we endeavour to promote good working relationships based on open communication between pupils, management and the wider community with which we interact.

These sentiments expressed in our school ethos are very much reflected in this policy and have been important markers in its formation. Our school has a central role in our pupils' moral and social development just as it does in their academic development. Pupils bring to school a wide variety of behaviour. As a school community we work towards standards of behaviour based on the basic principles of honesty, respect, consideration and responsibility. It follows that acceptable standards of behaviour are those that reflect these principles.

The Board of Management of Scoil Sheosaimh Naofa recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils. The Board receives regular summary reports from the Principal regarding bullying cases and undertakes an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation by the school. The Board is fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

- A proactive & preventative approach to reducing bullying (ref: PDST Anti-Bullying Support Material)
- A positive school culture and climate (See Appendix 1) 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; involves collaboration among and between staff & pupils 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 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 ongoing evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

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

‘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, 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.

Procedure for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying (Child to Child)

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

- The class teacher(s) initially
- The principal thereafter if necessary

Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it. In investigating and dealing with alleged bullying, the teacher will exercise their professional judgement.

STEP 1 – TEACHER LED

- When an incident of alleged bullying occurs the class teacher will investigate and deal with the matter initially.
- If, on investigation, the issue is of a minor nature and could not strictly be construed as bullying, the child/ren will be spoken to by the teacher involved and instructed as to their future good behaviour.
- Led by the teacher, the child(ren) who has caused upset and the child(ren) they upset are given the space to hold a restorative conversation.
- Restorative Practice questions (see Appendix 1) will be used as a framework to gather information. The teacher will record important information gathered.

STEP 2 – PRINCIPAL LED

- If the issue is not resolved satisfactorily after having gone through Step 1, the matter will be referred to the principal (or deputy principal if the principal is unavailable).
- The Principal will speak to the relevant whole class about behaviour in school and highlight the positive characteristics and behaviours that are expected throughout the school, without mentioning specific names of children involved in the alleged bullying.

STEP 3 – PRINCIPAL LED

- The Principal will speak to the children involved using the Restorative Practice framework and explain the expected behaviours in the school while also highlighting the positive behaviours of those involved.

STEP 4 – TEACHER LED

- The class teacher will revise content previously taught to the class regarding bullying and also cover new content with the class in the specific area of bullying that relates to the current issue.

STEP 5 – TEACHER LED

- If the issue remains unresolved, the teacher will complete the ‘Is it Bullying?’ Checklist (PDST Anti-Bullying Support Material/Page 76) in order to re-assess the situation. If the checklist indicates that bullying behaviour may be occurring, the child(ren) alleged to be engaged in bullying behaviour (supported by teacher, if necessary) will complete Activity Sheet 1 and 2 in Appendix 4.
- The teacher will contact the parents of the child(ren) involved to explain the situation to date and explain the next steps in the process.

STEP 6 – PRINCIPAL & TEACHER LED

- The Principal and class teacher will arrange to meet with the parents of the child(ren) who are alleged to be bullying and separately with the parents of the victim(s) of bullying.
- The children themselves may be required to attend part or all of these meetings.
- The purpose of the meeting is to resolve the relevant issues through dialogue.

Should the action taken at this point prove not to have resolved the issue, the following steps are to be followed.

STEP 7 – TEACHER LED

- If the issue remains unresolved, the teacher, after consultation with the Principal and parents of the child(ren) involved, will record the bullying behaviour in the standardized recording template ‘Template for Recording Bullying Behaviour’. (*Appendix 3 of Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary & Post-Primary Schools, 2013*) in the following circumstances:
 - a) in cases where the teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she determined that bullying behaviour occurred

- b) in cases 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.

The purpose of this record is:

- a) To aid memory by recording details of the incident
 - b) For clarity in assessment of the situation
 - c) For planning and intervention
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- The teacher will inform the child that a record is being taken and continue to investigate relevant incidents as per STEP 1 (Restorative Practice).

STEP 8 – TEACHER - CHILD LED

- The child who is bullying will be placed on report. This means that the child's behaviour in all areas is monitored during the day. The child has three meetings with his/her teacher and together they decide on what is to be written for that part of the day. All positive behaviour, progress on work etc will be noted. At the end of the day, the teacher writes his/her own comment. The purpose of this report is to focus as much as possible on the positive qualities and efforts of the child, and to motivate the child to move away from negative behaviour. The child should be able to see that parents and school are working together in his/her interest, so the co-operation of the parents is essential. Initially a review of the reports will be carried out on a weekly basis, in a meeting with the Principal, teacher, parents and child. If progress is being made, longer intervals between meetings may be decided upon. The child who is the victim of bullying may also meet with the Principal and his/her parents. The aim of such a meeting(s) will be to address emotional needs and devise strategies for the child to deal with the bullying. This may involve reinforcing the programme being covered in class, or other strategies.

STEP 9 – PRINCIPAL LED

- It is the duty of the school to provide a safe environment for all the children. Should the above interventions fail and the bullying continue, a programme of appropriate sanctions may be implemented by the Principal/Deputy Principal in consultation with the parents and Board of Management (Ref: Code of Behaviour). Sanctions implemented aim to encourage positive behaviour and support the esteem of the child. These sanctions may include a period of suspension during which there will be ongoing consultation with the parents to decide on appropriate action(s) to be taken in the best interests of the child. Suspension for any period of time will be reported in writing by the Principal to the Chair of the Board of Management.

Cyber bullying

WHAT IS CYBER-BULLYING?

There are many types of cyber-bullying. The more common types are:

1. Text messages – can be threatening or cause discomfort.
2. Picture/video-clips via mobile phone cameras – images sent to others to make the victim feel threatened or embarrassed
3. Mobile phone calls – silent calls, abusive messages or stealing the victim's phone and using it to harass others, to make them believe the victim is responsible
4. Emails – threatening or bullying emails, often sent using a pseudonym or somebody else's name
5. Bullying via websites – use of defamatory blogs (web logs), personal websites and online personal 'own web space' sites such as You Tube, Facebook, Instagram, Ask.fm, Snapchat and Twitter

Procedures to be followed:

- All reports of cyber bullying that happen **in school or on school related activities** will be investigated, recorded, stored in the Principal's office and monitored regularly
- Procedures in our school Anti-bullying Policy shall apply
The Gardai will be contacted in cases of actual or suspected illegal content
- This policy will be reviewed annually. Pupils, parents and staff will be involved in reviewing and revising this policy and any related school procedure

School Mobile Phone & Internet Acceptable Use Policy:

The type of bullying instanced above, in the normal course of events, should not occur in school as pupils are not allowed have mobile phones in school (as stated in AUP Policy). Parents will be asked to sign a statement that acknowledges that they have read and accept the content contained in the school's Internet Acceptable Use Policy and that they have discussed its meaning with their children.

Identity Based Bullying:

Identity-based bullying includes such bullying as homophobic bullying, racist bullying based on a person's membership of the Traveller community and bullying of those with disabilities or special educational needs.

Procedures: Same procedures to be followed as with child-to-child bullying.

Adult Bullying:

Attempts will be made to resolve the matter informally, if appropriate. If it is not possible to resolve the matter informally, a formal complaints procedure shall be applied incorporating the following steps:

1. A written report to the Board of Management should be made by the complainant or an authorised person to whom the complaint is being made and signed by the complainant.
2. The complaint will be investigated with minimum delay as confidentially as possible by two individuals named by the Board of Management, one of whom shall be the same sex as the complainant and the alleged perpetrator with due respect shown for the rights of both the complainant and the alleged perpetrator.
3. Both parties may be accompanied/represented at all interviews/meetings held, and these shall be recorded.
4. Where a complaint is found to be substantiated, the extent and the nature of the harassment will determine the form of action to be taken. This should involve counselling and/or monitoring or progressing the issue through the disciplinary and grievance procedure of the employment. Actions may include a verbal warning, a written warning, suspension from some duties with or without pay, suspension from full duties with or without pay or dismissal.
5. Where an employee is victimised as a result of invoking or participating in any aspect of the complaints procedure, including acting as a witness for another employee, such behaviour will also be subject to disciplinary action.
6. If either party is unhappy with the outcome of the investigation, the issue may be processed through the normal industrial relations mechanisms.

No record of any complaint will be registered on an employee's file unless the formal procedure outlined above has been invoked.

It is the policy of the school that issues of harassment are best dealt with within the school. However, no aspect of his policy affects any employee's individual legal rights to take their complaint outside of the school.

Bullying Prevention Strategies: This list is not exhaustive.

1. Circle time and class discussion on rights of individual – fairness etc.
2. Religion class, respect for others.
3. Posters, Leaflets, Role-play from time to time as appropriate.
4. Monitor new pupils as to how they are settling in.
5. Teacher, parents and other pupils, be watchful.
6. Encourage “victim” or other pupils to “tell” in confidence as early as possible.
7. Each class will have a ‘I wish the teacher knew’ box.
8. Teachers will give pupils positive notes or ‘Happygrams’ to show parents.
9. Class/line tokens after each break to promote kindness/playing well others/good behaviour. Class with most tokens at the end of term to receive a party.
10. Work on building self-esteem of pupils in S.P.H.E., Stay Safe, RSE etc.
11. Encourage a friendly atmosphere between pupil / pupil and pupil / teacher.
12. Advise pupils that a joke is no longer a joke when the other person feels hurt by it.
13. Encourage children to say things like: ‘please do not do that again’ or ‘do not do that, I don’t like it’.
14. Pupils learn about cyber bullying through S.P.H.E. and other curriculum subjects.
15. Community Garda to visit senior classes to talk about issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying.
16. Parents will be presented with advice on how to recognise and combat cyber bullying.

17. Pupils and parents to be encouraged to report in-school cyber bullying to teacher.
18. Staff and pupils will be made aware of issues surrounding cyber bullying through the use of appropriate awareness-raising exercises.
19. School Staff will implement the practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate as outlined in Appendix 2 of Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools.

Programme of Support for Working with Pupils affected by Bullying

(see 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.
- Circle Time activities
- SPHE Programmes
- NEPS Resources
- Barnardo's Roots of Empathy programme
- Play / Art Therapy
- **The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)**
- If pupils require counselling or further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. 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 relevant teacher.

INFORMATION FOR PUPILS:

If you are being bullied by phone or on the Internet:

- Remember, bullying is never your fault. It can be stopped and it can usually be traced.
- Don't ignore the bullying. Tell someone you trust, such as a teacher or parent or call an advice line.
- Try to keep calm. If you are frightened, try to show it as little as possible. Don't get angry, it will only make the person bullying you more likely to continue.
- Don't give out your personal details online – if you are in a chat room, do not say where you live, the school you go to, your email address etc. All these things can help someone who wants to harm you to build up a picture about you.
- Keep and save any bullying emails, text messages or images. Then you can show them to a parent or teacher as evidence.
- If you can, make a note of the time and date bullying messages or images were sent, and note any details about the sender
- There is plenty of online advice on how to react to cyber bullying.

Text/video messaging

- You can easily stop receiving text messages for a while by turning-off incoming messages for a couple of days. This might stop the person texting you by making them believe you've changed your phone number.
- If the bullying persists, you can change your phone number. Ask your mobile service provider about this.
- Don't reply to abusive or worrying text or video messages.
- Your mobile service provider will have a number for you to ring or text to report phone bullying. Visit their website for details.
- Don't delete messages from cyber bullies. You don't have to read them, but you should keep them as evidence.

Useful Websites

www.staysafe.ie

www.hse.ie

www.webwise.ie

www.antibullyingcampaign.ie

www.tacklebullying.ie

www.stopthebully.ie

www.spunout.ie

www.sticksandstones.ie

www.bbc.co.uk/schools/bullying

Review and Ratification:

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. It is also available on request. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

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: _____ (Principal)

Signed: Renee Gallagher (Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: 20/02/2024.

Date of next review: February 2025

APPENDIX 1

Restorative practices in schools have a number of proven benefits. Children show:

- Improved positivity, resilience and responsibility-taking
- Better behaviour management
- Greater respect and courtesy towards teachers and each other
- Increased empathy
- An understanding of how to make wrongs right.

Restorative practices centre around a set of key questions that help children think about their behaviour and understand how they can correct it:

- 1) What happened?
- 2) What were you thinking/feeling at the time?
- 3) What have you thought about it since?
- 4) Who has been affected? In what way?
- 5) How could things have been done differently?
- 6) What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

PDST ANTI-BULLYING SUPPORT MATERIAL

Questions for the pupil(s) engaged in alleged bullying behaviour

What happened?

What were you thinking about at the time?

What have your thoughts been since?

Who has been affected by what you did?

In what way have they been affected?

What do you think needs to happen next?

Questions for pupil(s) who is alleged to have been bullied:

What happened?

What were your thoughts at the time?

What have your thoughts been since?

How has this affected you and others?

What has been the hardest thing for you?

What do you think needs to happen next to make things right?

Questions based on the DES definition of bullying.

Is it Bullying? Checklist

	Consider....	Yes	No
1	Is the behaviour repeated? Only repeated incidents can be regarded as bullying. Once off incidents fall under the Code of Behaviour. However see 2 below		
2	Have there been any offensive or hurtful public messages or images placed on a social networking site or other public forum? Can the bullying image, statement or message be viewed or repeated by other people? NB: One such incident qualifies as cyber bullying.		
3	Is the behaviour planned?		
4	Is there unwanted negative behaviour inflicted on the victim?		
5	Is the unwanted negative behaviour of a physical, verbal or Psychological character?		
6	Is the behaviour inflicted by one person, or is there a group involved?		
7	Is the victim deliberately targeted?		
8	Do the behaviours involve deliberate exclusion, isolation, malicious gossip or other forms of relational aggression?		
9	Are the behaviours targeting an aspect of the victim's identity? For example physical, verbal or psychological aggression which is directed at their sexual orientation, their race, religion, ethnicity or traveller background.		
10	Are the behaviours targeting the victim because they have Special Educational Needs?		

APPENDIX 3

Appendix 3 Template for recording bullying behaviour

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name _____ Class _____

2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

3. Source of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es))*

Pupil concerned	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Pupil	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))*

Playground	<input type="checkbox"/>
Classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corridor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Toilets	<input type="checkbox"/>
School Bus	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern

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6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) *

Physical Aggression	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cyber-bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>
Damage to Property	<input type="checkbox"/>	Intimidation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Isolation/Exclusion	<input type="checkbox"/>	Malicious Gossip	<input type="checkbox"/>
Name Calling	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

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9. Details of actions taken

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Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

* **Note:** The categories listed in the tables 3, 4 & 6 are suggested and schools may add to or amend these to suit their own circumstances.

1 Activity Sheet

Questions:	Yes	No
1. Have you ever taken something that was not yours?		
2. Have you taken something from someone else without asking?		
3. Have you continued to talk over someone even though you know it is their turn to talk?		
4. Have you ever pushed in at the dinner/lunch queue?		
5. Have you ever ignored someone in a group?		
6. Have you ever refused to work with someone when a teacher has put you into a group?		
7. Have you ever refused to sit next to someone when asked to move seats?		
8. Have you ever offered a sweet or snack to your friends and left someone else out?		
9. Have you said something unpleasant about someone behind their back?		
10. Have you ever said something unpleasant about someone so that they could overhear you?		
Total (add up the total number of responses in each of the columns)		

2.

Question Reflection Sheet

Questions:	
a) How do you think the other person felt when you behaved this way?	
b) How do you think you might feel if someone behaved this way towards you?	
c) In what ways might you change this behaviour if faced with this situation again?	