

Scoil Naomh Caitriona 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 Naomh Caitriona 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.

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/or staff and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour:

(a) 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;

(See Appendix A: Practical tips for building a school culture and climate.)

(b) Effective leadership

(c) A school-wide approach

(d) A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact

(e) Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures)

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- 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;

(f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils

(g) Supports for staff

(h) Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies); and

(i) On-going 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:

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.

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with an allegation of bullying will normally be the class teacher. However, an allegation of bullying may be raised with any teacher in the school. Teachers will take appropriate measures regarding allegations in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy.

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:

- Teach anti bullying lessons in accordance with the S.P.H.E. Programme from the RSE Programme.
- Teach Stay Safe Lessons on bullying which focus on the different types of bullying and what to do if bullied.
- Teach Religion /Ethical programme content that relates to anti-bullying.
- Oral work in all subjects to promote self-esteem and enhance relationships.

- Use School Assemblies to foster a positive school spirit, to increase awareness of the schools anti-bullying policy.
- Staff will model respectful behaviour.
- Display respect messages in classrooms and around the school.
- Acknowledge desired respectful behaviour.
- Tackle the use of discriminatory/derogatory language in the school including homophobic/racist language and language that belittles pupils with a disability and give feedback when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- Teach school rules and promote/recognise compliance with school rules and routines.
- Explicitly teach pupils about appropriate use of social media and the need to be safe.
- Encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use.
- All staff will actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- Provide adequate supervision including playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.
- Actively seek parental support for anti-bullying measures/procedures.
- Make clear to pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are acting responsibly and are not telling tales.

Scoil Naomh Cairtriona's Acceptable Use Policy includes the necessary steps to ensure that access to technology within the school is strictly monitored, as is the pupils' use of mobile phones.

Pupils must hand their mobile phone to their teacher during school time and while on the school premises/grounds mobile phones or other social media devices should be switched off.

School computers have a system to block social media websites limiting access to opportunities to engage in any inappropriate activity online.

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:

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;

Reporting bullying behaviour

- Any pupil or parent may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.
- All reports, including any substantiated anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants, school traffic warden, 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:

- 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) 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 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) of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken. The school should give parent(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 her how she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;

- It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parent(s) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, her parent(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) or the 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) is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s) must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
- In the event that a parent(s) has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.
- If there is no reoccurrences of the bullying behaviour, in two years the matter is considered closed and any new allegation of bullying is considered a completely new matter.

The Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011 (Children First) and the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools provide that in situations where “the incident is serious and where the behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive, the school must consult the HSE Children and Family Social Services with a view to drawing up an appropriate response, such as a management plan”.

Serious instances of bullying behaviour will in accordance with the Children First and The Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools, be referred to the HSE Children and Family Services and/or Gardaí as appropriate.

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. Consideration needs to be given to where the records will be made e.g. incident 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.
- The school in consultation with the relevant teacher/s should develop a protocol for the storage of all records retained by the relevant teacher.

Formal Stage 2-Appendix B

The relevant teacher must use the recording template at Appendix B 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;

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

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

- 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.
 - Buddy / Peer mentoring 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. 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.

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. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management of Scoil Naomh Caitriona in September 2016.

11. 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. 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. (See Appendix C for Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation)

Appendix A: Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate

The following are some practical tips for immediate actions that can be taken to help build a positive school culture and climate and to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour.

- Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.
- Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.
- Catch them being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN.
- Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.
- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.
- Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use. Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.
- Actively involve parents and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media.
- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.
- Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.
- All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- Ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.
- School staff can get pupils to help them to identify bullying “hot spots” and “hot times” for bullying in the school.

- Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas, changing rooms, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision.
- Hot times again tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when pupils are in the playground/school yard or moving classrooms.
- Support the work of the Coiste (Student Council).