



Scoil Bhríde Anti-Bullying Policy

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 Bhríde, Kill 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.

Key Principles

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) A positive school culture and climate which **(See Appendix 1: Table A)**

- 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 1: Table A)**

(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) 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;

(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.

Definition of Bullying

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.

There are many examples of bullying behaviour that will fall under the remit of this policy.

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 networking 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*.

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

Principal

Deputy Principal

All class teachers

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

Education and Prevention Strategies

The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying) will be as follows:

Creation of a culture of "telling"

- Teachers should repeatedly reinforce the message that if anyone is the victim of bullying behaviour, they should not retaliate in any way, but they should tell an adult. Victims should be reassured that if they tell, something will be done about the bullying in a safe manner and all reported incidents will be dealt with.
- Class lessons will be provided to enable pupils to report incidents of bullying in a safe environment.
- Bystanders can be the key to resolving bullying and if anyone witnesses bullying behaviour, they should always tell a teacher. This is not telling tales but a means of protecting victims.
- A "worry box" will be put in each class from 2nd-6th.

Raising the awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour

- The school has an anti-bullying statement:

Bullying is wrong and is not tolerated in Scoil Bhríde. We are a telling school.

This will be displayed in the school foyer and other prominent places around the school environment.

- Aspects of bullying will be covered at morning assemblies. (What is bullying? What is not bullying? What to do if you feel you are being bullied? What to do if you see somebody else being bullied?)
- Class teachers will engage in formal teaching within the class setting through the SPHE and RE programmes.
- The school may hold a multi-cultural/ International day once per year.
- An annual Bullying Awareness Week will take place in October of each academic year for the school community. This will involve discussion, anti - bullying games, poster/slogan competitions and bullying surveys for classes 3rd-6th. Explicit teaching of the Bullying Unit from the relevant Stay Safe Programme will be taught in classes this week.
- The Sticks and Stones Programme may be run in the school each year for 5th Class students.
- The Parents' Association may run parenting workshops on bullying each year.

Other strategies

- Formal programmes of work are a vital element in raising children's self-esteem and equipping children to cope with bullying behaviour. Any of the following programmes may be taught in classes throughout the year as additional anti-bullying units. Walk Tall, RSE, Alive-O, Webwise, Roots of Empathy Programme(First Class), Mandalas Programme(Sixth Class) and Cool School Programme.
- Positive reinforcement by teachers in classroom setting.
- Modelling of respectful behaviour and language by teachers and staff.
- Promotion of extra-curricular activities which encourage co-operation among pupils.
- Rewarding good and improved behaviour and acts of kindness at both class and whole-school level.
- Encouraging students to look out for each other and to be responsible for their own behaviour.
- All teachers are required to be vigilant on yard duty.
- Immediate affirmation of children who report incidents of bullying which they have witnessed.
- Circle-time sessions, role-play, Socially Speaking programs and puppetry are methodologies which may be used to discuss and explore issues of bullying.
- Ensure supervision at all times when pupils can access the internet. (See AUP)
- Sanctions for unauthorised use of the internet/electronic devices will be imposed as per the Code of Behaviour.

- All teachers will do a lesson on internet safety to coincide with Internet Safety Day. (February 2015)
- A special school assembly at the beginning of the school year will be dedicated to outlining the school's anti-bullying policy (as per the recommendations from Dealing with Bullying in Schools (Office of the Ombudsman for Children 2013)).

Investigation, Follow-up and Recording 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 as follows:

Incidents of Bullying will be dealt with on a staged basis.

Stage 1

All reports of bullying must be dealt with initially by the class teacher (relevant teacher).

- When a pupil tells a teacher s/he is being bullied, it is important to gather all of the facts/ information from both sides (What, where, when, who, why?). This will involve an interview with the alleged bully using a list of restorative questions. This interview does not mean that guilt is being assumed but is a necessary stage in ascertaining whether or not bullying has occurred.
- If a parent or guardian wishes to report bullying, to a teacher, they will first be given an Incident Report Form. They will fill it out and return to the school as soon as is practically possible.
- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best to resolve the situation. Code of Behaviour may be invoked at this and any stage in the procedures.
- The aim for the class teacher 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).
- Non teaching staff should report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them to the relevant teacher.
- The teacher should take a calm, unemotional, problem-solving approach.
- All sides are listened to separately to establish if bullying has occurred.
- The notes are brief, factual and should be void of emotional or judgemental language.
- Where practicable, instances are investigated outside the classroom.
- All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regards to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way.

- Where possible, a witness is present.
- 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)
- It is explained to the alleged bully how hurtful their behaviour is and attempts are made to encourage them to empathise with the alleged victim.
- The child/ children involved will be asked to sign "Pupil Behaviour Promise 1".

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; **Appendix 5** or phonecall home will suffice.

See **Appendix 2** also

- 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;
- 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

Stage 2:

- If the child breaks this promise and re-offends, then the principal/ deputy principal, with the class teacher will interview the child/children again. It is explained to them that this is their second time offending and that they have not committed to their promise. Again attempts will be made to resolve the situation. Students will sign the "Pupil Behaviour Promise 2".
- Pupil Behaviour Promise 2 must also be signed by parents.
- Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigations 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.
- Information spoken about should not become available, so that the victim would be further tormented.

Stage 3:

- If a child breaks their 1st and 2nd promise, then the matter is escalated. The principal meets with the child and the parent(s) and considers options – which may include suspension and other Code of Behaviour sanctions.
- Recording of incidents: All incidents will be logged by class teacher and incidents which have not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days of initial bullying will be recorded by the class teacher on a specific recording template. This template will be completed in full and a copy given to the principal. At least once every school term the principal will provide a report to the BOM setting out the overall number of bullying cases reported and confirming that all cases are being dealt with in accordance with procedure.
- The school will constantly remind parents of the dangers of "cyber- bullying" as can happen with the use of social networking sites and mobile phones. We also direct their attention to the school's internet Acceptable Use Policy (AUP).

The school cannot be responsible for disagreements between pupils that happen outside the school grounds but will make reasonable efforts to cooperate with parents in assisting them to resolve the issues.

Support

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 and group work such as circle time.

If pupils require counselling of further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same with the support of parents. 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.

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

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.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 10th April 2014.

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.

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: Jean Moroney
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: Brendan Kelleher
(Principal)

Date: 10th April 2014

Date: 10th April 2014

Date of next review: April 2015

Appendix 1:

Table A: Key elements of a positive school culture and climate

The school acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment.

The school acknowledges the uniqueness of each individual and his/her worth as a human being.

The school promotes positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline and responsibility among all its members.

The school prohibits vulgar, offensive, sectarian or other aggressive behaviour or language by any of its members.

The school has a clear commitment to promoting equity in general and gender equity in particular in

all aspects of its functioning.

The school has the capacity to change in response to pupils' needs within its available resources.

The school identifies aspects of curriculum through which positive and lasting influences can be exerted towards forming pupils' attitudes and values.

The school takes particular care of "at risk" pupils and uses its monitoring systems to facilitate early intervention where necessary and it responds to the needs, fears or anxieties of individual members in a sensitive manner.

The school recognises the need to work in partnership with and keep parents informed on procedures to improve relationships on a school-wide basis.

The school recognises the role of parents in equipping the pupil with a range of life-skills.

The school recognises the role of other community agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying.

The school promotes habits of mutual respect, courtesy and an awareness of the interdependence of people in groups and communities.

The school promotes qualities of social responsibility, tolerance and understanding among all its members both in school and out of school.

Staff members share a collegiate responsibility, under the direction of the Principal, to act in preventing bullying/aggressive behaviour by any member of the school community.

Appendix 2

Practical tips for dealing with bullying behaviour:

For children:

What can you do if you are being bullied?

Remember that your silence is the bully's greatest weapon.

Tell yourself that you do not deserve to be bullied and that it is wrong.

Be proud of who you are. It is good to be an individual.

Try not to show that you are upset; it is hard but a bully thrives on someone's fear.

Stay with a group of friends/people (unless the bullying is happening in that group). There is normally safety in numbers.

Be assertive and follow the Stay Safe rules: **Say No, Get Away, Tell someone you trust, Keep telling them.**

Talk to a teacher for advice and help or if at home talk to your parents.

Teachers will listen to you and in accordance with procedure, will endeavour to deal with the issue.

Teachers will usually tell the Principal about the problem and together they will decide how to deal with it.

For parents:

What can you do if you suspect your child is being bullied?

Be aware of unusual behaviour in your children. For example, they may suddenly not wish to attend school, feel ill regularly, or not complete work to their normal standard. They may not want to invite certain children to play or go to activities they used to enjoy.

Always take an active role in your child's education. Enquire how their day went, who they spend their time with, how break time was spent etc.

If you feel your child may be a victim of bullying behaviour, make an appointment to see the class teacher.

It is important that you advise your child not to fight back. It can make matters worse.

Tell your child that there is nothing wrong with her/him; it is not her/his fault that they are being bullied.

Make sure your child is fully aware of the school policy regarding bullying and that they should not be afraid to ask for help.

Appendix 5

Dear Parent(s)/ Guardian(s),

It has come to our attention that your child has been involved in a bullying case under investigation in this school.

It appears your child's role has been more the Victim / Protagonist

Please refer to www.killschool.ie / policies for our anti-bullying policy. We trust, with continuing support, we can resolve the matter as quickly as possible. We will keep you informed of our progress.

Yours sincerely,

Class Teacher