

Scoil Lachtaín Naofa

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 Lachtaín 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.

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) 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;

(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.

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

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| <p>General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying</p> | <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 • 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. |
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| <p>Cyber</p> | <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> | |
| <p>Homophobic and Transgender</p> | <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 |
| <p>Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community</p> | <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>Relational</p> | <p>This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include:</p> <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 |

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| 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:

The Relevant Teachers in this school are:

Principal: **Mr. Brendan Tynan**

Deputy Principal: **Mrs. Róisín Bolger**

All class teachers

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):

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| Sample Education and prevention strategies |
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Teachers

- At all times staff will endeavour, through experiences offered to their pupils, and by their own example, to foster an atmosphere of responsibility, tolerance and respect for all throughout the school community.
- Teachers will ensure that the 'Stay Safe' programme is fully implemented.
- Through the delivery of the SPHE curriculum, and using Stay Safe, Walk Tall, RSE and Religious Education Programme, together with extra-curricular and sporting activities, teachers will strive to build in their pupils a strong sense of self-esteem and self-discipline.
- Various other social, health and media education programmes can further help to address the problem of bullying behaviour;
 - ❖ What is bullying? / Forms of bullying / Cyber bullying / Why people bully / Bystander bullying / Silent witnesses / Effects of bullying / Preventing and coping with bullying
- A copy of the school's Anti-bullying Policy and Code of Behaviour will be made available on our school website. The parents/guardians of the incoming Junior Infants, and other new

parents, each year will be required to sign an undertaking on our school enrolment form to agree to abide by, and support our Code of Behaviour which includes our Anti-bullying Policy and measures as an integral part.

- Each class will devise a code of conduct / set of Golden Rules at the beginning of each school year. These will promote respect for each other, inclusion and acceptance of difference.
- Teachers will discuss our anti-bullying policy and code of behaviour with their pupils at an age appropriate level
- In conjunction with the Stay Safe Programme, an '**Anti-bullying Week**' will be held each October. Competitions and events will be run in order to increase awareness of what bullying is, the impact it can have and how it can be addressed. A '**Friendship Week**' will be held in March / April. Concentration here will be on making and maintaining friends, dealing with conflict and responsibilities towards one another. [Dates to be decided at beginning of school year.]
- Where the opportunity arises, guest speakers will be invited to address staff and parents on aspects of bullying, including cyber-bullying and internet safety.
- An advice sheet for pupils and parents re. dealing with bullying will be distributed to all parents at the beginning of each school year.

Links to other policies

- List 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 Policy, Sporting Activities Policy, Special Educational Needs Policy.

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 of alleged bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, 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)/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;
- All reported incidents of bullying behaviour will be noted, investigated and treated as circumstances require. The **Classroom Incident Book** will be used to record a written account of discussions.
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.
- The Relevant Teacher(s) will question/interview the parties involved, both the victim(s) and perpetrator(s), and look for answers to what, who, when where and why.
- Where possible and with due regard to child protection issues, incidents should be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
- 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;
It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s).
- If it is established by the Relevant Teacher that bullying has occurred, he/she will keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as possible the relationships between the parties involved.
- 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 will be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken.
- The Principal / Deputy Principal will be informed of the case.
- 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.
- A verbal undertaking will be given by the perpetrator to stop the offending behaviour. This will be done in the presence of the Principal / Deputy Principal and Relevant Teacher. Parents/Guardians of the perpetrator may be asked to be present if deemed necessary. The perpetrator will also be requested to apologise to the victim in the presence of the Principal and another teacher and give an undertaking that the offending behaviour will stop.
- 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.

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.
 - Feedback may be sought from parents/guardians of both victim and perpetrator to review whether or not a change in behaviour has been achieved.
- 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.
- If the bullying recurs, a formal contract will be entered into by both parties and the parent(s)/guardian(s) of both parties will be informed. The contract will be monitored regularly by the Principal / Deputy Principal with the assistance of the class teacher to see that the situation is resolved.
- If after the above, the bullying behaviour recurs, a formal meeting of the perpetrator, his/her parent(s)/guardian(s), the Principal and the Chairperson of the Board of Management will be held and a formal suspension in line with the schools Code of Behaviour may/will occur. The Chairperson will have the authority to enact an immediate suspension or in certain circumstances may issue a final Chairperson's warning to the perpetrator e.g. where an extended period of time has elapsed since the last incident. The school's Code of Behaviour will be invoked from this point on.
- 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.

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 in the classroom / playground incident book. All incidents must be reported to the Relevant Teacher.
- While all reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher(s), the relevant teacher(s) will use his/her/their professional judgement in relation to the records to be kept of these 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.

Formal Stage 2-Appendix 3 (From DES Procedures)

The relevant teacher must record the bullying behaviour in the Standardised Recording Template (and a copy must be provided to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable) 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. In certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable. The timeline for recording bullying behaviour in the Recording Template does not in any way preclude the Relevant Teacher from consulting the Principal or Deputy Principal at an earlier stage in relation to the case.

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

Victims

- Victims are reassured from the outset that they are not to blame.
- Staff will, as well reasoning with the pupil perpetrating the negative behaviour, will offer continuing support and comfort to the victim.
- Strategies for restoring self-esteem will be explored between teacher and parents/guardians.
- The whole school will take a restorative approach to bullying.
- The Relevant teacher, and also the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable, will continue to monitor the situation, checking in regularly with the victim and offering assurances of continuing support.
- Parents will be updated as to what has occurred, measures being taken to modify behaviour and opportunities for them to support the process.
- Victims may be chosen for Social Skills sessions. As a part of skills learnt in individual/group sessions, children may be offered opportunities within the school to participate in some form of buddy system relative to their own circumstances.
- 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.
 - Pastoral care system
 - Buddy / Peer mentoring system
 - Student Support Team
 - Group work such as circle time
- Where deemed necessary, the child, in consultation with parents may be referred for counselling.

Perpetrators

- Help and support will be provided for the perpetrator and he/she will be assisted to view his/her actions from the victim's viewpoint.
- Bullies may be chosen for Social Skills sessions and personal development groups. They may be given counselling in order to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.
- Given the complexity of bullying behaviour, no one intervention programme works in all situations. Therefore, various approaches and intervention strategies may be used, including suggesting that parents seek referrals to appropriate outside agencies in order to receive further support for the pupils and their families if needed.

- Any pupil who is involved in retaliation against a pupil who reports bullying will be subject to the school's code of discipline.
- **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 on **9th October 2023**.

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). 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 (or where none exists, be otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: *A. Durnan*

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: *B. Tynan*

(Principal)

Date: **9th October 2023**.

Date: **9th October 2023**.

Date of next review: Oct. 2024

