

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 Pól, Kilfinane, Co. Limerick

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.

This policy is to be read in conjunction with Code of Behaviour and Acceptable Use Policy.

2. The Board of Management of Scoil Pól 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 mutually 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 – in line with Scoil Pól's Dignity in the Workplace Policy
- 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.

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 behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:

- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip and other forms of relational bullying,
- cyber-bullying - defined as the use of information and communication technologies to support deliberate, repeated and hostile behaviour by an individual or group that is intended to harm others
- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, transphobic 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 and the school's Pastoral Care Policy.

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*.

3. Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

All members of the school community have an obligation to report incidents of bullying.

A bullying concern may be reported to **any staff member** in the school who will document the concern and pass to a relevant teacher for investigation.

The 'relevant teachers' for investigating and dealing with bullying are:

- Principal

- Deputy Principal
- Year Head
- Pastoral Care teacher
- Guidance Counsellor

Parents are encouraged to contact the Deputy Principal/Principal immediately if they suspect or know that a student is being bullied. Parents are encouraged to keep a record of all incidents of bullying.

4. Education and Prevention strategies

- Initiatives and programmes focused on developing students' awareness and understanding of bullying, including its causes and effects. These programmes will include initiatives which deal with the issue of identity-based bullying and in particular homophobic and transphobic bullying.
- The school curriculum, in particular subjects such as Religion, CSPE, SPHE, Wellbeing will be used where possible to enlighten students about bullying and its effects as well as building self-esteem and resilience
- Provision of a broad range of extra-curricular activities which facilitate students to develop self-esteem and positive mental health
- Posting of relevant posters/displays (anti-bullying, acceptance, etc) around school
- Acceptance, inclusion, wellbeing and anti-bullying week
- Mental Health week
- Internet safety week
- Guest speakers invited to speak to students and parents
- Teaching the Social, Personal, Health Education (SPHE) programme - Growing Up LGBT and participating in LGBT awareness events, etc
- Prevention and awareness raising measures such as:
 - Educating students about appropriate on-line behaviour and how to stay safe while on line
 - Adhering to AUP policy
 - Appropriate controls on I.C.T. provision within school
 - Reporting any concerns about cyber bullying
 - Informing students on how to deal with bullying behaviour

5. Procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by Scoil Pól for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour

Scoil Pól'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 outlined below. Instances of bullying will be reported using the template which will be submitted to Deputy Principal (See Appendix 1)

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).

In investigating and dealing with alleged bullying, the relevant teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved

Procedures for investigation:

The students involved will be asked to give a written account of incident(s)

Information from others may be ascertained.

All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all students concerned.

While no absolute guarantee of confidentiality can be given, information will be dealt with in a sensitive manner.

Plan of action where bullying behaviour is established:

The offender is:

- made aware of how the Code of Behaviour has been breached
- made aware of the effect of their behaviour on offended student
- is invited to suggest a resolution
- made aware of applicable sanctions

Offended is:

- offered support through Pastoral care/Year Head structures and counselling
- offered opportunity to meet with offender to facilitate resolution and agree a mutually acceptable course of action

Parents/guardians:

Parents/guardians will be informed and encouraged to support action taken by the school

Follow-up:

The students will be subject to on-going monitoring by the relevant teacher.

6. Scoil Pól's **programme of support** for working with students affected by bullying is as follows:

- Those who have been subjected to bullying will be supported through the Pastoral Care/Year Head structures in the school
- Those who have been found to have engaged in bullying will be encouraged to recognise the inappropriateness of such behaviour and the seriousness of its effects on others and will be supported through the school's Pastoral Care and Year Head structures.
- Parents may be involved in putting in place strategies to correct the offending behaviour and support those affected by it.
- Further intervention may be deemed appropriate when instances of bullying occur. This may involve counselling by outside professionals. The objective of such intervention will be the restoration of confidence and self esteem in both offender and offended

Bullying behaviour which escalates, as part of the continuum of behaviour, may be subject to sanctions as per the school's Code of Behaviour

7. Supervision and Monitoring of Students

The Board of Management of Scoil Pól 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 and ongoing intervention, where necessary.

8. Prevention of Harassment

The Board of Management of Scoil Pól confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps as are reasonably practicable to prevent the sexual harassment of students or staff or the harassment of students or staff on any of the grounds specified in Ireland's Equality legislation i.e., gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management (BOM) on _____

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 Trustees, if requested.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management of Scoil Pól once 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 Department and the Trustees

Signed: _____
Chairperson of BOM

Signed: _____
Principal

Date: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 1:

Template for recording bullying behaviour

All written accounts from reporting and investigation to be attached

1. Name of student being bullied and class group

Name _____ Class _____

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

3. Source of bullying

concern/report (tick relevant box(es))*

Pupil concerned	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

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

Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
Recreational area	
School Bus	
Other	

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		Cyber-bullying	
Damage to Property		Intimidation	
Isolation/Exclusion		Malicious Gossip	
Name Calling		Other (specify)	

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

9. Details of actions taken

Signed: _____ (Relevant Teacher)

Date: _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____