

SCOIL MHUIRE LOURDES 13512B - Anti Bullying Policy

Our school community here in Scoil Mhuire Lourdes believes that each pupil has a right to an education free from fear and intimidation.

The school regards bullying as a serious infringement of individual rights and a serious threat to the self-esteem and self-confidence of targeted pupil(s). Therefore it does not tolerate bullying of any kind.

Every report of bullying is treated seriously and dealt with, having due regard for the well being of the targeted pupil(s) and the perpetrator(s).

An Anti-Bullying Team, made up the whole staff of Scoil Mhuire Lourdes, exists to cultivate an environment free from bullying.

The immediate priority, should a bullying incident occur, is ending the bullying, (thereby protecting the person(s) being targeted) and resolving the issues and restoring the relationships involved insofar as is practicable using a “Reform, not Blame” approach.

All pupils are expected to contribute to the creation and maintenance of a safe environment in the school. On becoming aware of any bullying situation, in or outside the school, involving members of the school community they should notify a trusted responsible adult. Bullying behaviour is too serious not to report.

Pupils’ participation in school life in general is encouraged through existing school structures. Awareness of bullying, and willingness to take action to prevent or stop it, is part of this participation.

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 Mhuire Lourdes 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 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
 - 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
 - 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)
- 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.

This definition includes a wide range of behaviour, whether verbal or written, whether physical or social, whether targeting person or property, whether carried out directly or indirectly or through any electronic or other medium, which could harm a pupil or undermine his/her self-esteem or self-confidence.

Appendix 1 gives a list of specific examples of bullying behaviour. This list is not exhaustive.

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

4. In accordance with section 6.8.3 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools the 'Relevant Teacher' will normally be the class teacher.
5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, 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):
 - The SPHE Curriculum, including the Stay Safe Programme, is used throughout the school to support the Anti-Bullying Policy.
 - Positive self-esteem is fostered among the pupils by celebrating individual differences, by acknowledging good behaviour and by providing opportunities for success.
 - Pupils are helped to develop empathy by discussing feelings and by trying to put themselves in the place of others.
 - Teachers respond sensitively to pupils who disclose incidents of bullying.
 - The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed regularly with the pupils in class. The Principal teacher speaks to all the classes on a regular basis and reminds them of the Code of Behaviour with special emphasis on treating each other in a kind and appropriate manner.
 - Pupils will be reminded of the school's Anti-Bullying policy at Assembly if appropriate.
 - All disclosed incidents of bullying are investigated.
 - Through presentations or other exercises, the school staff and parents/guardians are made aware of the nature of bullying and the signs that might indicate that a pupil is being bullied. They are encouraged to report any suspicion they may have to the 'Relevant Teacher' (in the case of staff members) or to the Principal or any staff member (in the case of parents/guardians).
 - Use will be made of the awareness-raising exercises from the 'Awareness- Raising' strand of the 'Anti-Bullying Campaign' which can be accessed through its website <http://www.antibullyingcampaign.ie> to proactively explain the nature and variety, causes, consequences and unacceptability of bullying.
 - Pupils are helped to examine the issue of bullying in a calm rational way, outside of the tense context of particular bullying incidents. In the process they are made more aware of the nature of bullying and the various forms it can take.
 - Pupils are made aware that the consequences of bullying behaviour are always bad for those who are targeted, even if this is not obvious at the time.
 - Pupils are encouraged to recognise, reject and report bullying behaviour, either spontaneously or through questionnaires that are used in the school.
 - An Anti-Bullying / Friendship Day / Week (as agreed each year) will be held where it will be emphasised that bullying is unacceptable.
 - Other incidental activities at the discretion of the class teacher.
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 (eg. The six step approach available from the 'Dealing with Incidents' section of the Anti-Bullying Campaign website, <http://www.antibullyingcampaign.ie>) are as follows:

- The 'Relevant Teacher' investigates all instances of reported or suspected bullying behaviour with a view to establishing the facts and bringing any such behaviour to an end.
- The school, through the 'Relevant Teacher' reserves the right to ask any pupil to write an account of what happened, as a part of the investigation. This will be part of standard procedure and does not imply that a pupil is guilty of misbehaviour.
- Pupils who are alleged to have been involved in bullying behaviour are interviewed by the 'Relevant Teacher' to establish the nature and extent of the behaviour and any reasons for it. In the event that they have been involved in bullying behaviour they are asked to sign a binding promise that they will treat all pupils fairly, equally and respectfully including the targeted pupil(s).
- The 'Relevant Teacher' does not apportion blame but rather treats bullying behaviour as a 'mistake' which can and must be remedied. He/she emphasises that the intention is not to punish perpetrators but to talk to them, to explain how harmful and hurtful bullying is and to seek a promise that it will stop. If that promise is forthcoming and is honoured there will be no penalty and that will be the end of the matter. Pupils who report bullying therefore are not getting others 'in trouble' so much as enabling them to get out of trouble into which they may ultimately get if the bullying continued.
- When an investigation is completed and/or a bullying situation is resolved the 'Relevant Teacher' will complete a report, to include the findings of the investigation, the strategy adopted and the outcome of the intervention, as well as any other relevant information. Copies of a reporting template (Appendix 3) from The Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools (2013) all teachers will be given to all teachers.
- If a pupil has signed such a promise but then chooses to break that promise and continue the bullying behaviour, this can no longer be considered a 'mistake'. In this event parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed and requested to countersign their son's promise. Breach of this additional promise by further bullying behaviour is regarded as a very grave matter and a serious sanction may be imposed by the school authorities (see sanctions below)
- All documentation regarding bullying incidents and their resolution is retained securely in the school.
- Sanctions:
Where a pupil has been found to be engaged in bullying behaviour, has formally promised to stop and has broken that promise, any of the following sanctions may be imposed:
 - The pupil may be asked to sign another promise, this time countersigned by a parent/guardian
 - Parents(s)/Guardian(s) may be contacted by the Principal/Relevant Teacher and informed of the nature and extent of the bullying behaviour with a view to agreeing a strategy whereby a promise to end the bullying behaviour would be honoured.
 - Parents(s)/Guardian(s) may be invited to a meeting with the Relevant Teacher and the Principal and the Pupil may be suspended from the school.
 - The case may be referred to the Board of Management and the pupil may be expelled from the school.

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

- **Bullied pupils:**

- Ending the bullying behaviour
- Changing the school culture to foster more respect for bullied pupils and all pupils
- Changing the school culture to foster greater empathy towards and support for bullied pupils
- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the awareness-raising programme
- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the speedy identification of those responsible and speedy resolution of bullying situations
- After resolution, enabling bullied pupils to complete a victim-impact statement
- Making adequate counselling facilities available to pupils who need it in a timely manner
- Helping bullied pupils raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school)
- Implementing a "buddy system" in the school (if applicable)

- **Bullying Pupils**

- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are not blamed or punished and get a "clean sheet"
- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are doing the right and honorable thing and giving them praise for this
- Making adequate counseling facilities available to help those who need it learn other ways of meeting their needs besides violating the rights of others
- Helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school)
- Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils' feelings of self-worth
- In dealing with negative behaviour in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child
- In dealing with bullying behaviour seeking resolution and offering a fresh start with a "clean sheet" and no blame in return for keeping a promise to reform

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 27/05/2014.
11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and is readily accessible to parents and pupils on request 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. A template to record the Annual review is available at Appendix 4. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and be readily accessible to parents and pupils on request 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: [Signature]
(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed: [Signature]
(Principal)

Date: 27 May 2014

Date: 29/5/2014

Date of next review: June 2015

Appendix 1

Bullying can take a number of forms. These may include any of the following (this list is not exhaustive):

Repeated aggressive behaviour/attitude/body language, for example:

- Shouting and uncontrolled anger,
- Personal insults,
- Verbal abuse,
- Offensive language directed at an individual,
- Continually shouting or dismissing others,
- Public verbal attacks/criticism,
- Domineering behaviour,
- Open aggression,
- Offensive gestures and unwanted physical contact.

Intimidation, either physical, psychological or emotional, for example:

- Treating in a dictatorial manner,
- Ridicule,
- Persistent slagging,
- Deliberate staring with the intent to discomfort.
- Persistent rudeness in behaviour and attitude toward a particular individual.
- Asking inappropriate questions/making inappropriate comments re. personal life/family
- Asking inappropriate questions/making inappropriate comments re. social life or schoolwork.

Interference with property, for example:

- Stealing/damaging books or equipment
- Stealing/damaging clothing or other property
- Demanding money with menaces
- Persistently moving, hiding or interfering with property
- Marking/defacing property

Undermining/Public or Private Humiliation, for example:

- Condescending tone,
- Deliberately withholding significant information and resources,
- Writing of anonymous notes,
- Malicious, disparaging or demeaning comments,
- Malicious tricks/derogatory jokes,
- Knowingly spreading rumours,
- Belittling others' efforts, their enthusiasm or their new ideas,
- Derogatory or offensive nicknames (name-calling),
- Using electronic or other media for any of the above (cyber bullying),
- Disrespectfully mimicking a particular individual in his/her absence,
- Deliberately refusing to address issues focusing instead on the person.

Ostracising or isolating, for example:

- Deliberately marginalising an individual
- Deliberately preventing a person from joining a group,
- Deliberately preventing from joining in an activity, schoolwork-related or recreational
- Blaming a pupil for things s/he did not do

Appendix 2

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 establishment and work of student councils.

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	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

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

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
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

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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.

Appendix 4

Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation. The following checklist must be used for this purpose. The checklist is an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. In order to complete the checklist, an examination and review involving both quantitative and qualitative analysis, as appropriate across the various elements of the implementation of the school's anti-bullying policy will be required.

Yes /No

Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools</i> ?	
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	
Is the Board satisfied that school staff are sufficiently familiar with the policy and procedures to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy and procedures in their day to day work?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	
Has the Board discussed how well the school is handling all reports of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and not therefore included in the Principal's periodic report to the Board?	
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	
Has the data available from cases reported to the Principal (by the bullying recording template) been analysed to identify any issues, trends or patterns in bullying behaviour?	
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	

Signed _____ Date _____

Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _____ Date _____

Principal

