



Scoil Barra Naofa Cailíní Anti-Bullying Policy

Introduction

We, the Scoil Barra Naofa Cailíní Beaumont school community, believe that each pupil has a right to an education free from fear and intimidation. We strive to create and cultivate an environment where every member of our community feels safe and happy. We value the uniqueness of each individual and his/her worth. We work to promote positive habits of self-respect, self-discipline, tolerance and understanding among all our members. We regard bullying as a serious infringement of individual rights and a serious threat to the self-esteem and self-confidence of targeted pupil(s), therefore, we do not tolerate bullying behaviour 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).

The school recognises the need to work in partnership with and keep parents informed on procedures to improve relationships on a school-wide basis. We value the role of parents in equipping the pupil with a range of life-skills. Pupils' participation in school life in general is encouraged through existing school structures. An awareness of bullying, and a willingness to take action to prevent or stop it, is part of this participation.

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.

Legislation

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 Barra Naofa Cailíní, Beaumont, has adopted the following Anti-Bullying Policy within the framework of the school's overall Code of Behaviour. This policy complies with the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools which were published in September 2013.

Role of the Board of Management

The Board of Management recognises the serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils and is therefore 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
 - 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
 - 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)
- i) On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

Bullying - A Definition:

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
- 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 her/his 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*.

Education and Prevention Strategies

The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity based bullying) used by the school are as follows:

- The anti-bullying module of the SPHE programme as it applies during each school year including the Stay Safe programme and Friends for Life programme
- In class exercises to pro-actively 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 that 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 always obvious at the time.
 - Pupils are encouraged to recognise, reject and report bullying behaviour, either spontaneously or through questionnaires that are regularly used in the school.
- Use school assemblies to foster a positive school spirit and to increase awareness of the school's anti bullying policy
- Staff will model respectful behaviour
- Display respect messages in classrooms and around the school
- Acknowledge desired respectful behaviour
- Teach pupils about appropriate use of social media and the need to be safe
- All staff will actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour. There will be adequate supervision including playground/school yard/outdoor supervision
- Ensure pupils understand that when they report incidents of bullying they are acting responsibly and are not telling tales.

School Procedure in Managing Allegations of 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. Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s)) understand this approach from the outset.

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.

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 '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 part of an investigation. This will be a standard procedure and does not necessarily 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" that can and must be remedied. S/he 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.

- If a pupil has signed such a promise but then chooses to break that promise and continue the bullying behaviour, this can then no longer be considered a "mistake." In this event parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed and requested to countersign their daughter/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.

Any disciplinary sanctions are a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, her parents and the school and are dealt with in accordance with the school's behaviour policy. In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher will, 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 parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal;

Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents will be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures. In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school will advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for children.

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

The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

Stage 1 - Informal

- All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. Should the teacher determine that an incidence of bullying has occurred they will then begin stage 2, a formal reporting procedure
- The relevant teacher must inform the principal of all incidents being investigated

Stage 2 - Formal

The relevant teacher will use the recording template at **Appendix 2** to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances

- When a member of staff determines that there has been an incidence of bullying behaviour that needs to be recorded
- 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
- Where the school has decided as part of its anti-bullying policy that 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 will be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy provided to the principal. All such records are to be filed in the pupil's folder in the Principal's office.

Established Intervention Strategies

The following strategies will be implemented to support relationships going forward:

- Teacher interviews with all pupils
- Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process
- Working with parent(s)/guardian(s) to support school interventions
- No Blame Approach
- Circle Time
- Restorative conferencing

Supporting Pupils

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

- *Pupils who have been bullied will be supported by the school within the limits of resources available through the provision of opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and thereby build resilience whenever this is needed. Where appropriate and available a referral for counselling may be made.*
- *Support for pupils involved in bullying behaviour will also be provided by the school within the limits of resources available. For those with low self-esteem this will include opportunities to increase feelings of self-worth. Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may be referred for counselling where appropriate and available to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others.*

Supervision

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 from 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.

Ratification of Anti-Bullying Policy

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 25th May 2015.

This policy was reviewed by the Board of Management _____.

This policy has been made available to school personnel, 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.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management regularly.

Notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, 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; _____
Chairperson of B.O.M.

Signed; _____
Principal

Date; _____

Date; _____

Date of next review; _____