

Anti-Bullying Policy (as incorporated into the Code Of Behaviour)

Scope of policy: This policy applies to the whole school community, students, teachers, management, board of management, parents, office, and all ancillary staff.

Rationale:

- 1) Department of Education and Science requires schools to have a written policy on bullying.
- 2) The Board of Management has a statutory obligation to ensure that a policy is in place that reflects the principles and values of the religious and educational philosophy of the school.
- 3) Involving and encouraging all members of the school community in developing, formulating and reviewing this policy on bullying promotes partnership, ownership and implementation of a living policy.

Links to Mission Statement:

We in Scoil Phobail Bhéara have a vision of the type of school we would like. It is a school guided by Christian values where children are happy and where everyone is treated with courtesy and respect.

While parents are primary educators of their children, our staff members, who act in loco parentis, are our most valuable resource and every effort must be made to ensure that we have a dedicated and committed staff and good pupil-staff relationships.

Our school is an integral part of our local community and in addition to providing the best possible education for our young people and preparing them for later life, our school should serve as a resource for and enrich our community.

We must do everything possible to assist our pupils to take responsibility for themselves and their actions and we must help them to appreciate and care for the world in which we live.

Objective: “We aspire to fulfil this commitment by fostering an atmosphere of respect, understanding and encouragement between all who teach, work and learn in the School so that the development and contribution of every individual can be acknowledged, and all can work together to benefit personal growth and the common good.”

Content:

Definition: Bullying consists of repeated inappropriate behaviour whether by word, by physical action or otherwise, directly or indirectly applied, by one or more persons against another person or persons which undermines the individual person’s right to personal dignity. Note: This is not to be confused with the good-natured banter that

goes on as part of the normal social interchange between students or the normal professional classroom management by teachers.

Types of behaviour deemed to be inappropriate:

- Humiliation; including name-calling, reference to academic ability etc.
- Intimidation; including aggressive use of body language.
- Verbal abuse, anonymous or otherwise.
- Physical abuse or threatened abuse.
- Aggressive or obscene language.
- Offensive joke; whether spoken or by email, text messaging etc.
- Victimisation; including very personal remarks.
- Exclusion and isolation.
- Intrusion through interfering with personal possessions or locker.
- Repeated unreasonable assignment to duties that are obviously unfavourable.
- Repeated unreasonable deadlines or tasks.
- Threats, including demands for money.
- An attack by rumour, gossip, innuendo or ridicule on any individual's reputation.

Statement on Bullying:

- Every person in the school is entitled to respect and to be free of any type of bullying.
- The School will work proactively, as far as it can, to ensure that bullying does not take place.
- Reporting incidents of bullying is responsible behaviour.
- A record will be kept of all reported incidents of bullying.
- The matter will be dealt with seriously.
- The School has a programme of support for both the bully and the bullied.
- Appropriate action will be taken to ensure that it does not continue.

It is School policy to provide **education on bullying** in the following manner:

- All year groups are facilitated through the S.P.H.E. (Social, Personal and Health Education) programme which incorporates bullying information and learning.
- A Mentor system is in place, where 5th year student(s) are paired with 1st year student(s) at the start of the new academic year; training is provided for the 5th years on how to be good mentor.
- New students who join the School at other times, are allocated a mentor – ideally, this is another student from within the same year group.
- Positive reinforcement of behaviour for the better good of the community is encouraged.

The school has an excellent pastoral care system in place, and reports of all incidents (wherever they may have been reported) will be filtered through the Class Teacher, who is the primary person for pastoral care of the student in her/his class.

Pastoral Care Team:

Chain of support: Student/Mentor/Class Captain/Class Teacher/Year Head/Deputy Principal/Principal/Board of Management/Guidance Counsellor/Chaplain/are available as support to the Pastoral Care Team.

Procedures for Noting and Reporting Incidents of Bullying:

- Students should discuss any incident of bullying with a teacher or another trusted adult within the school system; this is responsible behaviour rather than “telling tales”.
- Parents/guardians should contact the school regarding incidents of bullying behaviour which they might suspect or that have come to their attention through their children or other parents.

Incidents of bullying behaviour, no matter how trivial, which are drawn to the attention of a teacher, will be dealt with in the following manner:

- Appropriate personnel will interview all of the students involved in a bullying incident.
 - The alleged victim and alleged perpetrators of the incident will be spoken to and encouraged to solve the problem.
 - The alleged victim and perpetrators will be invited to write down any relevant details and a “Bullying Report Form” will be completed. Written statement from all involved in the incident will be attached to the Report Form.
 - All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils involved.
 - Records will be kept of all incidents and of the procedures that were followed.
- The Class Teachers will be kept informed of all incidents and have access to relevant written records.
- Year Head will monitor progress of students involved in a bullying incident by liaising with Class Teacher and students involved (separately) at follow-up meetings.
- Where the incident is deemed to be minor, a verbal warning will be given to the bully to stop the inappropriate behaviour, pointing out how she is in breach of the Code of Behaviour and trying to get him/her to see the situation from the victim’s point of view. If deemed appropriate, parents may be contacted.
- If the behaviour persists, the Year Head and the parents/guardians of the victims and bullies will be informed. Thus, they will be given the opportunity of discussing the matter and are in a position to help and support their children before a crisis occurs.
- If there is serious incident, perhaps repeated verbal assault or coercion, the matter should be reported to the Deputy Principal or Principal, parents will be involved and appropriate sanctions applied.

- Where the incident is deemed to be more serious (e.g. gross misbehaviour or physical assault), the Principal should be informed immediately and she will inform the Board of Management, if necessary.
- Offenders and victims of bullying may be referred to counselling.

- Sanctions may include:

A contract of good behaviour
 Withdrawal of privileges
 Other sanctions as may be deemed appropriate
 Suspension
 Expulsion

- In the case of a complaint regarding a staff member, this should be referred immediately to the Principal.
- Where cases, relating to either student or teacher, remain unresolved at school level, the matter should be referred to the Board of Management.
- In order to appeal a decision, a parent/student may request a review by writing to the Principal.

Roles and Responsibilities:

The school management team are responsible for ensuring that the policy is implemented.

Monitoring implementation:

Parents/guardians and all members of staff; include on agenda for teaching staff meetings at least once a year.

Review and evaluation:

Full review every three years; annual evaluation to ascertain the level of bullying behaviour in the school.

For additional information see Department of Education “Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour in Primary and Post-Primary Schools”.