



Scoil na bhForbacha Anti-Bullying Policy/ Polasaí Frithbhulaíochta

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 na bhForbacha 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; and
 - 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; 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;
 - 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.

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.

The school believes that its pupils have the right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. The school also has a clear policy on the promotion of **RESPECT** for everybody where it is made clear that bullying is a form of anti-social behaviour. It is important therefore that the school has a clear, written policy to promote this belief, where pupils and parent(s)/guardians are fully aware that any bullying complaints will be dealt with firmly, fairly and promptly.

Bullying is unwanted negative, verbal, psychological or physical behaviour conducted by an individual or group against others. Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, although not condoned, cannot be described as bullying. However when the behaviour is systematic and on-going it is bullying. Bullying is usually deliberate, hurtful treatment that is repeated over time. The person bullying has more power(physically or psychologically) than the person being bullied. Bullying affects everyone, not just the bullies and the victims. It also affects those children who watch and less

aggressive pupils can be drawn in by the group pressure. Bullying is not an inevitable part of school life or a necessary part of growing up and it rarely sorts itself out.

Combating Bullying and the Action towards Prevention:

Role of Staff

- The principal and staff exercise constant vigilance in the matter of misbehaviour. Our aim is to prevent misbehaviour rather than control. Positive behaviour is always recognised, affirmed and sought.
 - Any complaints of bullying are dealt with quickly, firmly and fairly.
 - The principal is informed of any instance of bullying.
 - Awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour is addressed in the classroom, through the school policy on pastoral care and other informal occasions when the opportunity arises.
 - Pupils are taught skills and encouraged to report any incident of bullying.
- The education 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:
- Parents, children and the school will be made aware of the issues through activities. The school yard will be supervised adequately.
 - Staff will educate children how to deal with bullying issues.
 - Racist, homophobic or insulting language will not be tolerated.
 - The SPHE/RSE/ Stay Safe & Walk Tall Programme will be implemented.
 - An Information Night/Anti-Bullying Course will take place every year.
 - The staff will encourage positive behaviour and language at all times.
 - Staff will encourage children to 'tell' if they are subjected to bullying or if they witness bad behaviour.
 - The staff will encourage an open and honest atmosphere at all times.
 - The school will organize visits by local Gardaí when feasible.
 - The school organises workshops for staff and parents re. Stay Safe/ Bullying, safety online etc.
 - The school will keep a written record of all incidents.

Advice for Pupils

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- Tell yourself that you do not deserve to be bullied, and that it is **WRONG**.
- Be proud of who you are. It is good to be individual.
- Try not to show that you are upset. It is hard but a bully thrives on someone's fear.
- Stay with a group of friends/people. There is safety in numbers.
- Be assertive – shout NO. Walk away confidently. Go straight to a teacher or member of staff.

- Fighting back makes things worse– So don't fight back. **REPORT** to a teacher or parent(s)/guardians instead. If you need support find a friend and both of you speak to the teacher.
- Generally it is best to tell an adult you trust straight away. You will get immediate support.

The teachers will take you seriously and will deal with bullies in a way which will end the bullying and will not make things worse for you.

IF YOU KNOW SOMEONE IS BEING BULLIED:

- **TAKE ACTION** – Watching and doing nothing looks as if you are on the side of the bully. It makes the victim feel more unhappy and on their own.
- If you feel you cannot get involved, tell an adult **IMMEDIATELY**. Teachers have ways of dealing with the bully without getting you into trouble.
- Do not be, or pretend to be, friends with a bully.

Advice for Parents

- Look for unusual behaviour in your children. For example, they may suddenly not wish to attend school, feel ill regularly, or not complete work to their normal standard, ask for money or begin stealing money.
- Always take an active role in your child's education by enquiring how they are getting on.
- If you feel your child may be a victim of bullying behaviour, inform the school **IMMEDIATELY**. Your complaint will be taken seriously and appropriate action will follow.
- It is important to advise your child not to fight back. It can make matters worse.
- Tell your child there is nothing wrong with him/her. It is not his/her fault that they are being bullied.
- Make sure your child is fully aware of the School Policy concerning Bullying, and that they will not be afraid to ask for help.

Procedures for Noting and Reporting an incident of Bullying Behaviour

1. All procedures of bullying, no matter how trivial, will be noted, investigated and dealt with by teachers. In that way pupils will gain confidence in reporting. This confidence factor is of vital importance.
2. Serious cases of bullying behaviour by pupils will be referred immediately to the Principal/Deputy Principal.
3. Parent(s) guardians of victims and bullies will be informed by the Principal/Deputy Principal earlier rather than later of incidents so that they are given the opportunity of discussing the matter. They are then in a position to help and support their children before a crisis occurs.
4. Non-teaching staff are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, to the teaching staff.
5. In the case of a complaint regarding a staff member, this should normally in the first incidence be raised with staff member in question and if necessary, with the Principal.
6. Where cases, relating to either a pupil or a teacher remain unresolved at school level, the matter should be referred to the School's Board of Management (see Complaints Procedure).

Procedure for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying:

Teachers will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour reported by either pupils, staff or parent(s)/guardians.. Such incidents will be investigated outside the classroom situation to avoid the public humiliation of the victim or the pupil engaged in bullying behaviour. In any incident of bullying, two staff members will speak to each

pupil involved separately, in a room away from the view of other children in an attempt to get both sides of the story. All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide useful information in this way:

1. When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the teacher will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
2. If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually and then the individuals are met as a group. Each member will be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone is clear about what everyone also has said.
3. If it is concluded that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the Code of Behaviour and Discipline and try to get him/her to see the situation from the victim's point of view.
4. In cases where it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, a meeting or discussion will take place with the parents or guardians of the two parties involved as appropriate to:

- a) explain the actions being taken and the reasons for them, referring them to the school policy
- b) discuss ways in which they can reinforce the actions taken by the school.

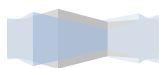
Sanctions

Sanctions are used in a corrective way and are intended to help the child to change and improve his or her behavioural patterns. The nature of the misbehaviour and the age of the child will determine the strategy to be employed.

Disciplinary Actions and Sanctions to deal with Bullying:

Bullying is a serious misdemeanour and the sanctions applied are the same as those listed below for serious misdemeanours.

- Apology to the victim
- A record is kept. Pupil/s write an account of the incident/s that lead to the Bullying behaviour and what they have learned from this episode in their lives – parents must sign this.
- Pupils may be removed from activity if endangering self or others.
- Pupil is sent to Principal/Deputy Principal and made aware that suspension could be a possibility
- In cases where it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred the Principal/Deputy Principal informs parents.
- Suspension procedures may follow if deemed necessary by the school authorities.
- The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows (see section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools):
- Supporting the child and allowing them to express their emotions, in a supportive environment.
- Close monitoring of the situation and keeping the parent and Principal informed.
- Referral to counselling services/ family support services if the situation deems it.



Disciplinary Actions and Sanctions to deal with Misdemeanours:

The degree of misdemeanours i.e. minor, serious or gross, will be judged by the teachers and/or Principal based on a common sense approach with regard to the gravity/frequency of such misdemeanours.

Examples of Minor Misdemeanours:

Interrupting class work/ arriving late for school/ running in school building/not listening and speaking out of turn/leaving seat without permission at break or lunch time/ placing unfinished food in bins/ leaving litter around school/ not wearing correct uniform/ being discourteous or unmannerly/ not completing homework without good reason/ not bringing explanation notes for absences and homework/ wearing unsuitable shoes/ cycling in school grounds etc.

Examples of steps to be taken by teachers when dealing with Minor Misdemeanours

- The class teacher will normally deal with classroom misdemeanours.
- Verbal reprimand and reasoning with the pupil, including advice on how to improve, setting realistic targets.
- Time out from friends and others (to reflect on the misbehaviour).
- Loss of privileges.
- Noting incidence of yard misbehaviour in teachers book
- Note in homework journal or other to parents.

Examples of steps to be taken when dealing with REGULAR occurrences of Minor Misdemeanours:

- A record is kept of regular instances of misdemeanour.
- Following repeated instances of misdemeanour the pupil is sent to Principal/Deputy Principal.
- The child will receive detention (supervised) with written work.
- Class teacher meets with parent(s)/guardian. Details of all misbehaviour will be given to parents.

Examples of Serious Misdemeanours:

Bullying/ Constantly disruptive in class/ telling lies/stealing/damaging or interfering with another person's property/back answering a teacher/leaving school premises during school day without appropriate permission/ using or writing unacceptable language/ bringing solvents to school/ deliberately injuring a fellow pupil or partaking in any activity which would put themselves or others in danger/ deliberately leaving taps on/ misuse of fire equipment/ bringing in mobile phones to school without permission.

Examples of steps to be taken when dealing with Serious Misdemeanours:

- Pupil is sent to Principal/ Deputy Principal
- Principal/Deputy Principal contacts parent/guardian
- Pupils may be removed from activity if endangering self or others
- The child will write an account of what they have done. They may receive detention (supervised) with written work. Temporary separation from peers, friends and others may also occur.
- A record is kept of all serious misdemeanours.

Examples of Gross Misdemeanours:

Deliberately vandalizing school property/ aggressive, insulting, threatening or violent behaviour towards any person. Bringing alcohol, drugs, cigarettes, lighters to school.

Examples of steps to be taken when dealing with Gross Misdemeanours:

- Principal/Deputy Principal contacts parent/guardian immediately and parents will be called to meet the principal in the school.
- While waiting for the parents' presence in the school or while the discussion is taking place, the child may be removed from class and placed in another classroom with written work to do. The child writes an account of what happened and how they will behave in the future. The Board of Management has authorised the Chairman or Principal to sanction an immediate suspension following discussion with the parents. If the parents do not attend the meeting, the pupils may be suspended and parents informed by letter.
- A record is kept of the incident.
- Suspension or expulsion may be considered

SUSPENSION:

While the Board of Management has the authority to suspend, the Board of Management of Scoil Na bhForbacha has delegated this authority to the principal, for periods of up to three days. The BoM has also authorised the Principal, with the approval of the Chairperson of the Board, to impose a suspension of up to five days in circumstances where a meeting of the Board cannot be convened in a timely fashion. The BoM has placed a ceiling of ten days on any one period of suspension imposed by it.

Immediate Suspension: In exceptional circumstances the Principal may consider an immediate suspension to be necessary, where the continued presence of the student in the school at the time would represent a serious threat to the safety of students or staff of the school, or any other person.

'Automatic Suspension': A Board of Management may decide, as part of the school's policy on sanctions, and following the consultation process with the Principal, parents, teachers and students, that particular named behaviours incur suspension as a sanction.

The following procedure will be followed in Scoil na bhForbacha

- An investigation of the facts to confirm serious misbehaviour.
- Parents will be informed by phone or in writing about the incident.
- Parents will be given an opportunity to respond.

If suspension is still decided upon

The principal will notify the parent in writing of the decision to suspend. The letter will confirm.

- The period of the suspension and the dates on which the suspension will begin and end.
- The reasons for the suspension.
- Any study programme to be followed.
- The arrangements for returning to school, including any commitments to be entered into by the student and the parents.
- The provision for appeal to the Board of management
- The provision for appeal to the Secretary General of the DES. (Only where the total number of days for which the student has been suspended in the current school year reaches 20 days.)
- Where the cumulative total of days reached 6, the NEWB will be notified.

Records and reports.

Formal written records will be kept of:

- The investigation (including notes of all interviews held)

- The decision-making process.
- The decision and rationale for the decision.
- The duration of the suspension and any conditions attached to the suspension.

EXPULSION:

Procedures in respect of expulsion.

- A detailed investigation carried out under the direction of the principal.
- A recommendation to the BOM by the principal
- Consideration by the BOM of the principal's recommendations and the holding of a hearing.
- BOM deliberations and actions following the hearing.
- If BOM is of the opinion that the student will be expelled, the Board must notify the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) in writing, of its opinion and the reasons for this opinion. The intention to expel a student does not take effect until 20 school days have elapsed after NEWB have received written notification. The NEWB will be notified using a **Notice of Intention to Expel form** which is available on www.schoolreturn.ie or from the helpline (1890 36 3666). This form will be completed and sent to **School Return Section, National Educational Welfare Board, 16-22 Green St, Dublin 7.**
- Consultations arranged by the EWO.
- Confirmation of the decision to expel.

Appeals

A parent may appeal a decision to expel to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills (Education Act 1998 Section 29)

SUCCESS CRITERIA: (by which the policy will be judged)

- Atmosphere of discipline within the school
- Children are aware of school rules
- Staff apply school rules
- Growth in self discipline
- Co-operation between parents, teachers and pupils in maintaining the code.
- Comments or compliments on behaviour.
- Children working to the best of their ability
- Class working to the best of their ability
- Improvements in behaviour

MONITORING AND REVIEW:

Each staff member is responsible for the implementation of the Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy. Within the classroom the teacher monitors his/her class. Teachers consider themselves responsible for the behaviour of children within sight or sound of them and respond to any instance of unacceptable behaviour. The principal is responsible for monitoring and reviewing Policy at staff level on a regular basis and reports any review the staff deem necessary to the Board of Management.

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The Board of Management (BOM) has ultimate responsibility for discipline in the school under its management and a duty to ensure that a fair code of discipline applies therein. The BOM will ensure the Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policy is reviewed every year or at a time that the Board requests.

In registering children in Scoil na bhForbacha parents are expected to support teachers in following the policies and procedures of the school. A copy of all policies and procedures is available at the school for viewing by all parents and a list of those policies will be available on the school's website..

