

St Buithe's N.S.

Anti-Bullying policy

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the National Education Welfare Board, the Board of Management of Scoil Naomh Buithe 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.
- 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 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.

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

TYPES OF BULLYING

The following are some of the types of bullying behavior that can occur amongst pupils:

Physical Aggression:

It includes pushing, shoving, punching, kicking, poking and tripping people up. It may also take the form of severe physical assault. While boys commonly engage in 'mess fights', they can often be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.

Damage to property:

Personal property can be the focus of attention for bullying behavior. This may result in damage to clothing, school books and other learning materials. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Items of personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.

Extortion:

Demands for money may be made, often accompanied by threats (sometimes carried out) in the event of the target is not promptly "paying up". Victims' lunches or personal belongings may be taken. Victims may also be forced into theft of property for delivery to the perpetrator. Sometimes, this tactic is used with the sole purpose of incriminating the target.

Intimidation:

Some bullying behaviour takes the form of intimidation: it is based on the use of very aggressive body language with the voice being used as a weapon. Particularly upsetting to targets can be a facial expression (the so-called 'look') which conveys aggression and/or dislike.

Isolation/Exclusion and other Relational Bullying:

This form of bullying behaviour seems to be more prevalent among girls. A certain person is deliberately isolated, excluded or ignored by some or the

entire class group. This practice is usually initiated by the person engaged in bullying behavior and can be difficult to detect. It may be accompanied by writing insulting remarks about the target on blackboards or in public places, by passing around notes about, or drawings of, the target or by whispering insults about them loud enough to be heard.

Relational bullying occurs when a person's attempts to socialise and form relationships with peers are repeatedly rejected or undermined. One of the most common forms includes control: "Do this or I won't be your friend anymore"(implied or stated); a group ganging up against one person (girl or boy); non-verbal gesturing; malicious gossip; spreading rumours about a person or giving them the "silent treatment".

Name Calling:

Persistent name-calling directed at the same individual(s) which hurts, insults or humiliates should be regarded as a form of bullying behavior. Often name-calling of this type refers to physical appearance i.e. size or clothes worn. Accent or distinctive voice characteristics may attract negative attention. Academic ability can also provoke name calling. This tends to operate at two extremes; first, there are those who are singled out for attention because they are perceived to be slow, or weak, academically and secondly those who are perceived to be high achievers.

Slagging:

This behaviour usually refers to the good-natured banter which goes on as part of the normal social interchange between people. However, when this slagging extends to very personal remarks aimed again and again at the one individual about appearance, clothing, and personal hygiene or involve references of an uncomplimentary nature to members of one's family, it assumes the form of bullying. It may take the form of suggestive remarks about a pupil's sexual orientation.

Cyber-bullying: This type of bullying is increasingly common and is continuously evolving. It is bullying carried out through the use of information and communication technologies such as text, social network sites, e-mail, instant messaging (IM), apps, gaming sites, chat-rooms and other online technologies. Being the target of inappropriate or hurtful messages is the most common form of online bullying. As cyber-bullying uses technology to perpetrate bullying behaviour and does not require face to face contact, cyber-bullying can occur at any time (day or night). Many forms of bullying can be facilitated through cyber-bullying. For example, a target may be sent homophobic text messages or pictures may be posted with negative comments about a person's sexuality,

appearance etc.

Abusive anonymous telephone calls are a form of bullying.

4. The relevant teachers for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows:

All Teachers will be vigilant, respond sensitively and caringly to pupils who disclose incidence of bullying and investigate all disclosed incidents of bullying. Individual teachers in consultation with the Principal will record and take appropriate measures regarding reports of bullying behaviour in accordance with the school's policy and DES Circular045/2013. (Attached)

5. The education and prevention strategies that are used by the school are as follows:

St Buites School Community believes that each student is entitled to a stable and secure learning environment and has the right to an education that is free from fear, annoyance and intimidation. Bullying behavior undermines this right and will not be tolerated.

We endeavor to enhance the self-esteem of everyone in the school community, to imbue in the pupils respect for people and property and to encourage in them the idea of being responsible. It is imperative that the atmosphere of the school and classroom be one of peace and harmony. Bullying in all its forms runs counter to the fostering of such an atmosphere.

The school's approach to the problem of bullying is one which endeavors to prevent rather than to cure bullying within the school. A high degree of school wide vigilance and openness is important. With this in mind the school regularly reviews its supervision of pupils with a view to improving the level of safety and security afforded to our pupils.

Teachers will help pupils to develop empathy by discussing feelings and trying to put themselves in the place of others.

Teachers will discuss the school's anti-bullying policy with the pupils and use behavioural management strategies which focus on problem solving and enable pupils to take an active role in finding a solution to problems.

Programmes like S.A.L.T, Discipline for Learning etc will be used as necessary.

The formal curriculum of the school will also be used to educate all pupils against bullying behaviour. Anti bullying issues may be raised through the schools Religion Programme, the Social, Personal and Health Education Programme, the Arts and/or Circle time.

The best way to address cyber-bullying is to take measures to prevent it

happening in the first place.

Parents and pupils have key roles and responsibilities in preventing this type of bullying behavior. Parents must support the school as they deal with any negative impact within the school of bullying elsewhere. It is imperative that parents closely supervise their children's mobile phone and internet activity. Pupils should be educated on how to stay safe on line and encouraged to report any concerns about cyber bullying to their parents.

Children have very limited and fully supervised access to the internet during school hours. Mobile phones are not allowed except in cases of absolute necessity and only then by prior arrangement with Management. Hand held game consoles, Nintendos etc are not allowed as we encourage the children to communicate face to face and play together during school time.

We have a whole-school approach to prevent bullying. For us this means that everyone in the school community is responsible for its prevention.

Responsibilities are outlined as follows:

Board of Management

The B.O.M. is responsible for ensuring that all members of the school Community are enabled to deal effectively with bullying. The Board will ensure that proper supervisory and monitoring measures are in place to prevent bullying and to deal with incidents appropriately as they arise.

School Staff.

The school staff will work to foster an atmosphere of friendship, respect and tolerance. Children`s self- esteem will be developed through celebrating individual differences, achievements, acknowledging and rewarding good behaviour and manners and providing opportunities for success throughout the curriculum and school. Teachers will help pupils to develop empathy by discussing feelings and trying to put themselves in the place of others. Relationships with pupils will be based on mutual respect and trust so that pupils will have confidence in the school staff. Teachers will be vigilant, respond sensitively and caringly to pupils who disclose incidence of bullying and investigate all disclosed incidents of bullying.

Individual teachers in consultation with the Principal will record and take appropriate measures regarding reports of bullying behaviour in accordance with the school's policy.

Non-teaching staff such as S.N.As., secretaries, caretakers and cleaners are

encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the appropriate teaching member of staff.

Teachers will discuss the school's anti-bullying policy with the pupils and use behavioural management strategies which focus on problem solving and enable pupils to take an active role in finding a solution to problems.

The formal curriculum of the school will also be used to educate all pupils against bullying behaviour. Anti bullying issues may be raised through the schools Religion Programme, the Social, Personal and Health Education Programme and the Arts and/or Circle time.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to be tolerant and to have mutual respect for each other, and all school personnel, and behave in accordance with school's Code of discipline.

Pupils should report incidents of bullying to their parents and teachers.

Parents

Parents are expected to:

Encourage positive behavior and discourage negative behavior both at home and at school.

Encourage children to solve difficulties without resorting to aggression.

Encourage children to share, to be, kind, to be caring and to be understanding towards others.

Watch out for signs and symptoms that their child is being bullied or is bullying others.

Strictly supervise children's internet access and mobile phone use.

Discuss the school's anti-bullying policy with their child.

Support the school in its efforts to prevent and treat bullying.

To recognize that a school that openly discusses bullying is acting positively.

Cooperate with and support school authorities' decisions re sanctions/support for target and perpetrators of bullying.

Others in the school community:

The promotion of relevant home/school/community links is important to us in regard to countering bullying behaviour. For example, bullying behaviour can often occur on the journey to and/or from school. Members of the wider community who come directly in daily contact with school pupils are encouraged to play a positive role in assisting schools to counter bullying behaviour by reporting such behaviour to parents and/or to the school as appropriate. Through such approaches, a network is formed. In certain cases, however, it

may be necessary for the school to seek the assistance of other local persons and formal agencies such as NEPS, HSE social workers, community workers, Gardaí etc.

6. The schools procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behavior and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:

6.1 It is made clear to all students that when they report incidents of bullying that they are behaving responsibly and they will be listened to.

6.2 On becoming aware that bullying may be taking place in the school, an investigation will be carried out by the class teacher which will endeavor to establish:

- What?
- Where?
- When?
- Who?
- Why?
- How?

Teachers are best advised to take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parents/guardians. Such incidents are best investigated outside the classroom situation to avoid the public humiliation of the victim or the pupil engaged in bullying, in an attempt to get both sides of the story. All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Teachers may also speak to pupils who are not involved. Their contribution may be unbiased and may add perspective to the situation. A useful question to ask in this context is "Is anybody in your class getting a hard time"

If a gang is involved, each member should be interviewed individually and then the gang should be met as a group. Each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone is clear about what everyone else has said.

All children involved in a confrontational and or alleged bullying incident may be required to give a written account of their behaviour.

Pupils who have witnessed the alleged incident may also be asked to give a written account of same, if deemed necessary, as may other children

who are not directly involved. This will be a standard procedure and does not necessarily imply that a student is guilty of misbehaviour.

6.3 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 he/she will be encouraged to see the situation from the victim's point of view. A verbal warning will be issued and the incident recorded on a St Buites bullying record form. The completed Bullying Record form is to be brought to the attention of the Principal before being filed in the Bullying Records folder. Parents of both parties will be made aware of the situation, so that they may co-operate with and support the school.

6.4 If the bullying reoccurs the matter is to be referred to the Principal. A formal warning will be issued to the perpetrator and appropriate sanctions will be imposed. Perpetrators may be excluded from the school playground or subject to special monitoring procedures and if bullying continues they may be suspended in accordance with procedure. Parents of both parties will be invited to meet the Principal. The actions being taken and the reasons for same will be explained to them, referring them to the Code of Behaviour Policy if necessary. Parents will be asked to reinforce and support the actions taken by the school.

6.5 Serious cases of bullying behaviour by pupils should be referred immediately to the Principal.

6.7 Persistent or very serious cases of bullying may be referred to the Board of Management who may take whatever steps are appropriate in dealing with the situation.

6.8 Follow-up meetings with the two parties involved (separately) may be arranged, with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the target is ready and agreeable.

6.9 A report will be prepared which will include the findings of the investigation, the strategy adopted and the outcome of the interventions as well as any further suggestions for rehabilitation of both Target/s and Perpetrator/s

N.B. All cases of alleged bullying will be investigated as outlined above Under no circumstances should a parent take things into their own hands and approach another child, in the class room/schoolyard or environs.

7. The Schools programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows:

Pupils involved in bullying behaviour need assistance on an ongoing basis. For those low in self-esteem opportunities should be developed to increase feelings of self-worth. Pupils who engage in bullying behaviour may need counselling to help them learn other ways of meeting their needs without violating the rights of others. Victims may need counselling and opportunities to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem and to develop their friendship and social skills whenever this is needed. There are modules in our comprehensive School S.P.H.E. programme, which aim to increase self -esteem and develop an awareness of bullying. We aim to provide an environment where children feel safe, secure and find it easy to express their anxieties.

School working with and through the various local agencies in countering all forms of bullying as an anti-social behavior.

We would encourage a whole community approach to the problem of bullying behaviour. The promotion of relevant home/school/community links is important for all schools in regard to countering bullying behaviour and should be encouraged as a normal part of the school's effective operation.

In certain cases, however, it may be necessary to invite the assistance of other local persons and formal agencies for example: General Medical Practitioners, Gardaí, N.E.P.S. Psychologist, Educational Welfare Officer, HSE social workers/ community workers.

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 and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management as necessary.