

ANTI-BULLYING / ANTI-RACISM POLICY

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the National Educational Welfare Board (NEWB), the Board of Management of Scoil Iosaif Naofa, Kinvara, Roll 15523Q- 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 by the Department of Education and Skills (DES) in September 2013.

2. The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and racism, and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of children and young people and is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying/racist behaviour:

A positive school culture and climate which-

- is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
- encourages children 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 children; and
- explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying.

Effective supervision and monitoring of children; 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 school's anti-bullying/racism policy and procedures.

3. Bullying can be defined as follows:

.....unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.

(DES, 2013, p.8)

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 (SEN).

Negative behaviour that does not meet the above definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's *Discipline and Code of Behaviour Policy*, e.g. 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 above definition of bullying and will be dealt with, as appropriate, in accordance with the school's code of behaviour. However, 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 and will be dealt with by the school accordingly. That said, the school will not investigate allegations of bullying where the parties concerned have acted illegally in the first instance by providing a false date of birth for the purpose of registering on the social media network. In such cases, allegations of bullying should be referred by parents/guardians for investigation to An Garda Síochána.

[Note: Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* (DES, 2013). www.antibullyingcampaign.ie is also a very useful website for advice, lesson plans and activities.]

4. PREVENTING BULLYING/RACIST BEHAVIOUR

The school will first and foremost aim to prevent bullying behaviour from occurring through use of the following education and prevention strategies:

Using the lesson plans for Third to Sixth class available on the www.antibullyingcampaign.ie website and outlined in **Appendix 4** of this policy document.

As introduced under the Yellow Flag Initiative, the continuation of an anti-bullying campaign every January to include e.g. drama/poster/poetry/film-making etc. with an emphasis on cross-curricular lessons (SPHE, Stay Safe Programme, History, Drama etc.) and activities, which are particularly relevant to the prevention of bullying and racism and the promotion of respect for diversity and inclusiveness.

Holding a friendship week in February of every year.

Encouraging teachers to complete extension work within the curricular subjects, leading to and facilitating discussion on anti-bullying and anti-racist issues, and diversity in general.

Explicitly teaching the children about the appropriate use of social media.

Actively involving parents and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media.

Positively encouraging children to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use with reference to the school's *Computer Acceptable Use Policy* and the *Use of Phone Policy*. Following up and following through with children who ignore the rules.

Explicitly teaching school rules in child friendly language. Displaying and highlighting school rules in the classroom and in the playground.

Displaying the school's diversity code in a prominent area of the school. Posting the school's diversity code on the school's website.

Modelling respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.

Explicitly teaching children what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.

Catching the children being good – noticing and acknowledging desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention. Using a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and

routines, e.g. 'Star of the Week' and 'Class of the Month' awards.

Consistently tackling the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of children with a disability or SEN.

Encouraging children to report bullying and racist behaviour. All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying and racism will be investigated. It will be made clear to all children that when they report any incidents of bullying and racism they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.

As introduced under the Yellow Flag initiative, all classes from 2nd – 6th use a 'Worry Box' where pupils may 'post' their worries. Teachers deal with each posted worry at a suitable time and in a suitable manner, whether the posting is named or anonymous.

Giving constructive feedback to children when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent while at the same time reiterating the notion that bullying/racist behaviour is not acceptable and will not be tolerated.

Actively watching out for signs of bullying/racist behaviour. Ensuring there is adequate indoor and outdoor supervision. Getting children to help identify bullying "hot spots" and "hot times" for bullying/racist behaviour in the school.

Maintaining, developing and encouraging the work of the Student Council.

5. PROCEDURES FOR INVESTIGATION OF BULLYING/RACIST BEHAVIOUR

While a parent or child may bring a concern regarding bullying/racist behaviour to any teacher in the school, the member of staff with initial responsibility for investigating and dealing with the allegation will be the child's class teacher. However, the class teacher will not investigate allegations of bullying where the parties concerned have acted illegally in the first instance by providing a false date of birth for the purpose of registering on a social media network. In such cases, allegations of bullying should be referred by parents/guardians for investigation to An Garda Síochána.

The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying/racist

behaviour and the established intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows:

- (i) Parent(s)/guardian(s) who wish to make an allegation of bullying/racism should contact their child's class teacher in the first instance and then provide all relevant information in writing on a **Bullying Allegation Report Sheet** contained in **Appendix 1** of this policy document and also available from the class teacher or school secretary. The class teacher will then open and maintain a file on the matter.
 - (ii) When a class teacher is made aware of bullying/racist behaviour s/he will record the nature of the behaviour and details of any incident(s), the names of the parties involved, and the names of any witnesses. The class teacher will bring the matter to the attention of his/her class level assistant principal and the school Principal or Deputy Principal.
 - (iii) The class teacher will then investigate the matter (with the advice and support of his/her class level assistant principal if necessary) and maintain appropriate written records of the investigation. She/he will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. The primary aim for the class teacher in investigating and dealing with bullying will be to resolve any issues and to restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved (rather than to apportion blame).
 - (iv) In general, incidents will be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
 - (v) If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually at first. They may be asked to write down their account of the incident(s). Thereafter, all those involved will be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member will be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements.
 - (vi) In investigating and dealing with bullying/racism, the class teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying/racism has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
 - (vii) Where the class teacher has determined that a child has been engaged in bullying/racist behaviour, it will be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts will be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the child being

bullied. The parents of the parties involved will be contacted to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken.

(viii) In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the class teacher will, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:

- Whether the bullying/racist 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; and
- Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal.

(ix) In cases where the class teacher considers that the bullying/racist behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying/racist behaviour has occurred, it will be recorded by the class teacher in the recording template of the *DES Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* contained in **Appendix 2** of this policy document. A copy of the recording template will be retained by the class teacher and a copy given to the Principal or Deputy Principal as appropriate.

(x) Some or all of the following strategies will be used, as appropriate, in response to bullying/racist behaviour:

- Discussion and reasoning with the child. Explaining to him/her what is wrong with the bullying/racist behaviour and how it affects the other person(s). Seeking an apology and committal to discontinue such behaviour.
- Fair and appropriate reprimand, which will include advice on acceptable behaviour.
- Temporary separation from friends and peers, with appropriate additional work prescribed;
- Supervised detention during Break times;
- Additional work that is fair and appropriate in terms of amount and content;
- Referral to the class level assistant principal.

- Referral to Post Holders(s) with responsibility for discipline.
- Implementation of behaviour management programme in consultation with the child's parent(s)/guardians(s) (with reference to the school's *Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties Continuum of Support Policy*);
- Referral to Principal or Deputy Principal;
- Referral to external agency, if appropriate, with parent/guardian consent;
- Temporary suspension in accordance with the terms of Rule 130(5) of the Rules for National Schools;
- Expulsion, as a last resort, when all interventions and all possibilities for changing the bullying behaviour have been exhausted;
- Referral of serious instances of bullying or potentially abusive behaviour to the HSE Children and Family Services and/or Gardaí as appropriate

[Note: Any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required will be a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school]

- (xi) Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved will be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable. This can have a therapeutic effect.
- (xii) *Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying/racism case in accordance with the DES anti-bullying 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.*

6. SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN AFFECTED BY BULLYING/RACIST BEHAVIOUR

The school's programme of support for children affected by bullying/racist behaviour is as follows:

- (i) The class teacher will maintain contact with the child's parents and continue to monitor the situation on an on-going basis to ensure that the bullying behaviour has stopped.
- (ii) If appropriate, the child will attend the school's Resource Unit for a short period of time on their own or as part of a holistic group with a view to enhancing their self-esteem and self-worth.
- (iii) The school will seek advice from the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) and Child and Adult Mental Health Services (CAMHS) with a view to providing counselling services for the child if necessary.

7. SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN INVOLVED IN BULLYING/RACIST BEHAVIOUR

The school's programme of support for children involved in bullying/racist behaviour is as follows:

- (i) Incidents of positive behaviour within and outside of the classroom will be recorded. Efforts by children to improve behaviour will be recognised, approved and rewarded by the school.
- (ii) If appropriate, children will attend the Resource Unit for a short period of time as part of a holistic group with a view to enhancing their self-esteem and self-worth.
- (iii) Behaviour management programmes (with reference to the school's *Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties Continuum of Support Policy*) will be used by the class teachers to support children's efforts to behave appropriately.
- (iv) The school will seek advice from the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) and Child and Adult Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

8. PROCEDURES FOR EVALUATION OF ANTI-BULLYING/ANTI-RACISM POLICY

8.1 Periodic summary reports to the Board of Management

At the end of each school term, the Principal will provide a report to the Board of Management setting out:

- (i) the overall number of bullying cases reported (by means of the bullying template of the DES *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*) since the previous report to the Board; and
- (ii) confirmation that all cases referred to at (i) above have been or are being dealt with in accordance with the school's anti-bullying/anti-racism policy and the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*. The minutes of the Board of Management meeting will record the above but will not include any identifying details of the children involved.

8.2 Annual Review by the Board of Management

8.2.1 The Board of Management will undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation by the school.

8.2.2A standardised checklist from the DES *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post- Primary Schools* contained in **Appendix 3** of this policy document will be used in undertaking the review.

8.2.3 The school will put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement identified by the review.

9. SUPERVISION AND MONITORING OF CHILDREN

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying/racist behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

10. 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 children 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.

11. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 20/09/2016

12. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

13. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website 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 *Patrick Burke* Date 20/09 2016
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed *Dominic Gallagher* Date 20/09/2016
Principal