

# *Scoil Ghormáin Naofa*

Castletown, Gorey, Co. Wexford

Single Manager:  
Anthony Byrne

*Anti-Bullying  
Policy*

School Principal:  
Lisa Dempsey

*Scoil Ghormáin  
Naofa*

*Anti-Bullying  
Policy*

## **Introduction**

Bullying affects everyone, not just the bullies and the victims. It also affects those other children who watch, and less aggressive pupils can be drawn in by group pressure. Bullying is not an inevitable part of school life or a necessary part of growing up, and it rarely sorts itself out. It is clear that certain jokes, insults, intimidating/threatening behaviour, written abuse and violence are to be found in our society. No one person or group, whether staff or pupil, should have to accept this type of behaviour. Only when all issues of bullying are addressed, will a child best be able to benefit from the opportunities available at our school.

### **Why is an anti-bullying policy necessary?**

This school believes that its pupils have the right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without the fear of being bullied. All institutions, both large and small, contain some numbers of pupils with the potential for bullying behaviour. If a school is well disciplined and organised, it can minimise the occurrence of bullying. The school also has a clear policy on the promotion of good citizenship, where it is made clear that bullying is a form of anti-social behaviour.

Bullying is wrong and it will not be tolerated in our school. It is important therefore that we have a clear written policy to promote this belief, where both pupils and parents/guardians are fully aware that any bullying complaints will be dealt with firmly, fairly and promptly.

### **Our Anti-Bullying Policy**

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the Code of Behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB, the Manager of Scoil Ghormáin Naofa 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 Manager 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;

Table A (6.1.5 Procedures): Key elements of a positive school culture and climate, and also Appendix 2: Practical tips for building a school culture and climate.

- 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.

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 (2.2) of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*. *Information on the impact, indicators and other characteristics of bullying behaviour is set out in Sections 3 and 4 of these procedures.*

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying are as follows: (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

1. All class teachers
2. Principal

**Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.**

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying, homophobic and trans-phobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows (see Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*):

#### **School-wide approach**

- A school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.
- The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils through the curricular activities. Pupils will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.
- Whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develop an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it – 'prevention and intervention.'
- School wide awareness-raising (including displays & newsletters) on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider

school community. (The school's anti-bullying policy is published on the school website and referred to in school newsletters.)

- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds and school tours, extra-curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and to report issues to relevant teachers.
- Involvement of our older pupils in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. buddy system, mentoring, and other student support activities that can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and 'how to tell.'

### **Implementation of specific Curricular Areas:**

- The full implementation of the SPHE curriculum and the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes. E.g [*Development work to continue in the areas of: Cyber-Bullying and Identity-based Bullying.*]
- Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programme, when available. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardai, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying.

### **Links to other school policies**

- Code of Behaviour, Child Protection Policy, Acceptable Use Policy (ICT) Parental Involvement Policy, Learning Support Policy, Relationships & Sexuality Education (RSE) Policy.

6. The school's procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour and the intervention strategies used by the school for dealing with cases of bullying behaviour are as follows (see Section 6.8.9 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):

Investigating and Dealing with Bullying (the school will adhere to section 6.8.9 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures)

- 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.)
- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

Recording of bullying behaviour (adhere to section 6.8.10)

- Informal pre-determination that bullying has occurred.
- Formal Stage 1 - determination that bullying has occurred.

If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

- Formal Stage 2 – ‘Appendix 3’

The relevant teacher shall use the recording template at **Appendix 3** to record the bullying behaviour 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.

- When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and a copy maintained by the principal.

## Intervention strategies in use at this school

- Teacher/pupil interviews
- Home/school communication. (Working with parent(s)/guardian(s) to support school interventions.)
- 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.)
- Circle Time.
- Sanctions if necessary as outlined in Appendix 1.

7. 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):

- All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience e.g. pastoral care system, buddy/peer mentoring system, group work (such as Circle Time.)
- If pupils require counselling or further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or the pupil involved in the bullying behaviour.
- Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

## 8. Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils

The Manager confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring practices are in place to both prevent and deal with bullying behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible. At least once in every school term, the Principal must provide a report to the Manager setting out the overall number of bullying cases reported (by means of the bullying recording template at Appendix 3) since the previous report to the Board and confirmation that all cases referred to at (i) above have been or are being, dealt with in accordance with the school's anti-bullying policy and *the Anti-bullying procedures for primary and post primary schools*.

## 9. Prevention of Harassment

The Manager 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 was adopted by the Single School Manager in June 2014.

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, is otherwise 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.

12. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Manager 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 (or where none exists, be otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parent-Teacher Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

(Manager)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

(Principal)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of next review: June 2015

## Appendix One

### **WHAT CAN YOU DO IF YOU ARE BEING BULLIED?**

**Remember that your silence is the bully's greatest weapon!**

- a) Tell yourself that you do not deserve to be bullied, and that it is WRONG!
- b) Be proud of who you are. It is good to be individual.
- c) Try not to show that you are upset. A bully thrives on someone's fear.
- d) Stay with a group of friends/people. There is safety in numbers.
- e) Be assertive - shout "No!" Walk confidently away. Go straight to a teacher or member of staff.
- f) Fighting back may make things worse. Talk to a teacher or parent/guardian first.
- g) 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.**

### **IF YOU KNOW SOMEONE IS BEING BULLIED:-**

- a) 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.
- b) If you feel you cannot get involved, tell an adult IMMEDIATELY. Teachers have ways of dealing with the bully without getting you into trouble.
- c) Do not be, or pretend to be, friends with a bully.

### **AS A PARENT:-**

- a) 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.
- b) Always take an active role in your child's education. Enquire how their day has gone, who they have spent their time with, how lunch time was spent etc.
- c) 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.
- d) It is important that you advise your child not to fight back. It can make matters worse!
- e) Tell your own son or daughter there is nothing wrong with him or her. It is not his or her fault that they are being bullied.
- f.) Make sure your child is fully aware of the School policy concerning bullying, and that they will not be afraid to ask for help.

## SANCTIONS

In every school today, it is accepted that there is a need for sanctions to register disapproval of unacceptable behaviour. The sanctions which are operational in this school are reasonable. The following strategies may be used to show disapproval of unacceptable behaviour:

- Reasoning with pupil
- Reprimand, including advice on how to improve
- Temporary separation from peers, friends or others
- Loss of privileges, such as school tour. Parental co-operation can be of great value here, i.e. to ban television for a week or so, to stop some privilege at home, pocket-money, etc. to reinforce home-school link
- Referral to Principal
- Communication with Parents
- Suspension (temporary)

When there are repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, the Manager will be informed and the parents will be requested in writing to attend at the school to meet the Manager and Principal. If the parents do not give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future, the pupil may have to be suspended for a temporary period. Suspension will be in accordance with the terms of Rule 130 (5) of the Rules for National Schools. The Manager or Principal is authorised to exclude a pupil or pupils from the school for a maximum initial period of 3 days, for being continuously disruptive or for a serious breach of discipline. Expulsion may be considered in an extreme case in accordance with Rule 130 (6).

Every effort is made by all members of staff to adopt a positive approach to the question of behaviour in our school. Scoil Ghormáin Naofa places greater emphasis on rewards than on sanctions in the belief that this will in the long run give the best results. We teach the children pride in themselves, their school and community.

All our parents can co-operate with Scoil Ghormain Naofa staff and management by encouraging their children to abide by the school rules, by visiting the school when necessary and by ensuring that homework is allocated due time and effort by the child. Parents will be made aware of the school homework policy and how they can assist at parent-teacher encounters. Each class teacher will have their own rules within a classroom.

You the parents play a crucial role in shaping the attitudes which produce good behaviour in our school. Please take full advantage of all formal and informal channels of communication made available by the staff. If there is something bothering you, the school door is always open. Class teachers are available to see parents by appointment. The Principal is also available by appointment. (0402 37596)

## Appendix 2

### Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate

The following are some practical tips for immediate actions that can be taken to help build a positive school culture and climate and to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour.

- Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.
- Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.
- Catch them being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN.
- Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.
- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.
- Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use.
- Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.
- Actively involve parents and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media.
- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.
- Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.
- All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- Ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.
- School staff can get pupils to help them to identify bullying “hot spots” and “hot times” for bullying in the school.
- Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas, changing rooms, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision.
- Hot times again tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when pupils are in the playground/school yard or moving classrooms.
- Support the establishment and work of student councils.

### Appendix 3: Template for recording bullying behaviour

#### 1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Class: \_\_\_\_\_

#### 2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

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#### 3. Source of bullying concern/report -tick relevant box(es)

Pupil concerned	
Other pupil(s)	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

#### 4. Location of incidents -tick relevant box(es)

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
Other	

#### 5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern

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#### 6. Type of Bullying Behaviour - tick relevant box(es)

Physical aggression		Cyber-bullying	
Damage to property		Intimidation	
Isolation/Exclusion		Malicious gossip	
Name calling			
Other (specify)			

**7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:**

<b>Homophobic</b>	<b>Disability/SEN Related</b>	<b>Racist</b>	<b>Membership of Traveller Community</b>	<b>Other (specify)</b>

**8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact**

**9. Details of actions taken**

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
(Relevant Teacher)

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_  
(Relevant Teacher)

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 4

### Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation

The Manager must undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation. The following checklist must be used for this purpose. The checklist is an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. In order to complete the checklist, an examination and review involving both quantitative and qualitative analysis, as appropriate across the various elements of the implementation of the school's anti-bullying policy will be required.

Has the Manager formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools?	
Has the Manager published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	
Has the Manager ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	
Is the Manager satisfied that school staff are sufficiently familiar with the policy and procedures to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy and procedures in their day to day work?	
Has the Manager ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	
Has the Manager received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	
Has the Manager discussed how well the school is handling all reports of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and not therefore included in the Principal's periodic report to the Manager?	
Has the Manager received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	
Has the data available from cases reported to the Principal (by the bullying recording template) been analysed to identify any issues, trends or patterns in bullying behaviour?	
Has the Manager identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	
Has the Manager put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Single Manager**

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Principal**

**Notification regarding the Manager's annual review of the anti-bullying policy**

To: \_\_\_\_\_

The Manager of \_\_\_\_\_ wishes to inform you that:

- The Manager's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed on \_\_\_\_\_ [date].
- This review was conducted in accordance with the checklist set out in Appendix 4 of the Department's Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Manager

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal