



Scoil Mobhí

Bóthar Mobhí

Glasnaíon

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Student Anti-Bullying Policy (as per DES)

This policy is to be read and understood in conjunction with Scoil Mobhí's Code of Behaviour 2020.

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 Mobhí 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) A positive school culture and climate which

- is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
- encourages pupils and staff to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
- promotes respectful relationships across the school community;

(b) Effective leadership

(c) A school-wide approach

(d) A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact

(e) 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;

(f) Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils

(g) Supports for staff

(h) Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies) and

(i) 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
- 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 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*. See attached **Appendix 1** for examples of Bullying Behaviour.

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows:

The Relevant Teacher in Scoil Mobhí is the class teacher

- The primary aim for the relevant teacher 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.
- All members of staff including non-teaching staff must report any alleged incident of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher.

Any teacher or member of staff can act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it, or at the Principal's discretion.

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:

Education and prevention strategies in Scoil Mobhí

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 both curricular and extracurricular 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 with prevention and intervention.

An annual audit of professional development needs with a view to assessing staff requirements through internal staff knowledge/expertise and external sources

Professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teacher(s)

School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community. Strategies and practices taught in school need to be reinforced and supported at home.

Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra- curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will also be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.

Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school.

The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parent(s)/guardian(s)s are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school. Both of these policies are published on the school website www.scoilmobhi.ie.

Regular focus on anti-bullying in both October and February of each school year with Friendship Week (plan of work attached).

Pupils in Rang 2-6 complete survey once per school year **Appendix 7**

Stay Safe Programme taught in the second/third term of every second year 2017, 2019 with revision of the programme in alternative years.

Walk Tall Programme taught in the second/ third term of alternative years 2018, 2020.(due to Covid-19 this may now happen in 2021.)

Anti-bullying workshops given to 4th, 5th and 6th classes on a cyclical basis (January 2018, November 2020).

Anti-bullying talks given to parents and in-service given to staff every three years January 2018, November 2020.

Cyber safety talk to be given by an Garda Síochána yearly in 4th, 5th and 6th class during 2019-2020 school year..

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.

- Ø Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell.
 - Ø Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
 - Ø Hand note up with homework.
 - Ø Make a phone call to the school or to a trusted teacher in the school.
 - Ø Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
 - Ø Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
 - Ø Students are advised to give any evidence of bullying to their parents or teacher.
- Parents should approach the class teacher if they suspect that their child(or any other child) is being bullied.
 - The development of an Acceptable Use Policy in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored. Use of mobile phones as per our mobile phone policy.

Implementation of curricula

The full implementation of the Catholic school programme ‘I nGrá Dé’ SPHE curriculum and the RSE and Stay Safe and Walk Tall Programmes.

Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes. (where available)

School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes, e.g. Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme

Delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes at primary level. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardaí, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying

The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.

Links to other policies

Code of Behaviour, Child Protection, Supervision of pupils, Acceptable Use policy.

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

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Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

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The primary aim in investigating and dealing with alleged 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);

The school's procedures must be consistent with the following approach.

Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s)) understand this approach from the outset.

Reporting bullying behaviour

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Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring an alleged bullying incident to the attention of any teacher or staff member in the school.

All reports, including anonymous reports of alleged bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. Children are taught and encouraged to always report any alleged incident of bullying behaviour witnessed or experienced by them.

Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), caretakers, cleaners must report any incidents of alleged bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;

Investigating and dealing with incidents: Style of approach

- In investigating and dealing with alleged bullying, the (relevant)teacher will refer to the policy definition of bullying and exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;

Parent(s)/guardian(s) and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and addressing positively, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible;

Teachers should take a calm, unemotional approach.

Where possible incidents should be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved; and parties should be interviewed separately, at least initially.

All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way;

When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner;

If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met as a group. At the group meeting, each member should be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone in the group is clear about each other's statements;

Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after the interview by the teacher; It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s)

In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (by reference to the school policy). The school should give parent(s)/guardian(s) an opportunity to discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports provided to the pupils;

Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;

It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parent(s)/guardian(s)) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school.

Follow up and recording

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

- Whether the bullying 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 ;

- Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardian(s) or the school Principal or Deputy Principal

Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should 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.

Where a parent(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.

In the event that a parent(s)/guardian(s) has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Recording of bullying behaviour

It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner.

The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

Informal- pre-determination that bullying has or has not occurred

- All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher. Each class teacher will record events on Aladdin.
- While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher must keep a written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same
- The relevant teacher must inform the principal that an investigation has been initiated.

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. These are to be recorded on Aladdin.

Formal Stage 2-Appendix 3 (From DES Procedures)

The relevant teacher will use the recording template at **Appendix 3** to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

- a) 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; and
- b) Where the school has decided in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

See attached **Appendix 1** for examples of Bullying Behaviour and refer to Scoil Mobhí's Code of Behaviour **2020**.

When the recording template is used, it must be retained by the relevant teacher in question, stored in the 'Fillteán Ranga' (or on Aladdin) of the class and a copy given to the principal.

Established intervention strategies

Teacher interviews with all pupils

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

Working with parent(s)/guardian(s) to support school interventions

No blame, calm, unemotional approach

Circle Time

Restorative interviews

Restorative conferencing

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

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying involves a whole school approach. Given the complexity of bullying, no one intervention/support programme works in all situations. Therefore various approaches and intervention strategies may be used - Stay Safe, Walk Tall, RSE, I nGrá Dé.

All 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.

- If pupils require counselling or further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise them. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour. e.g. NEPS, CAMHS, Childline, Barnardos,
- Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a member of staff.

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, to the very best of their ability.

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 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 to the Department and the patron if requested.

11. 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 (or where none exists, be otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

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This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on **22 Deireadh Fómhair 2020**.

Signed: _____ Signed: _____

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

(Principal)

Date: _____

Date: _____