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## **Anti-bullying policy**

The Scoil Mhuire Naofa school community believes that each pupil has a right to an education free from fear and intimidation.

The school regards bullying as a serious infringement of individual rights and a serious threat to the self-esteem and self-confidence of targeted pupil(s). Therefore it does not tolerate bullying of any kind.

Every report of bullying is treated seriously and dealt with, having due regard for the wellbeing of the targeted pupil(s) and the perpetrator(s).

An 'Anti-Bullying Team,' made up of staff members, parents and pupils exist to carry out the annual review of our Anti Bullying Policy and cultivate an environment free from bullying.

The immediate priority, should a bullying incident occur, is ending the bullying, (thereby protecting the person(s) being targeted) and resolving the issues and restoring the relationships involved insofar as is practicable using a "Reform, not Blame" approach.

All pupils are expected to contribute to the creation and maintenance a safe environment in the school. On becoming aware of any bullying situation, in or outside the school, involving members of the school community they should notify a trusted responsible adult. Bullying behaviour is too serious not to report.

Pupils' participation in school life in general is encouraged through existing school structures. Awareness of bullying, and willingness to take action to prevent or stop it, is part of this participation.

1. In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB (National Education Welfare Board), the Board of Management of Scoil Mhuire 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. Three focus groups, comprising of Pupils, Teachers and Parents were consulted in the drafting of this policy.

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;

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- encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and promotes respectful relationships across the school community (Pupils, Parents, Staff, Board and wider 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;
  - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and trans phobic bullying.
- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils during school time.
- 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 (including name calling)
- cyber-bullying (Which shall be deemed to include phone/text and e bullying, i.e, sending upsetting messages or images.) 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 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

4. Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* states "the member of teaching staff who has responsibility for investigating and dealing with bullying is referred to as the "relevant teacher". In our school, the relevant teacher is the class teacher." The list of staff undertaking lunchtime supervision is prominently displayed in the office and staffroom.

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5. The education and prevention strategies including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and trans phobic bullying that will be used by the school are as follows:

- In Our school we use a comprehensive programme from Prim-Ed publishing ([www.prim-ed.com](http://www.prim-ed.com)) which is used as part of our SPHE (Social Personal Health Education) Curriculum
- Bullying is addressed in the Code of Behaviour and in school and class rules. It is also referred to regularly in the class and yard.
- The school environment utilises many visual signs that reinforce the slogans used in our Bullying Programmes.
- The school welcomes regular input from parents in all matters regarding children's welfare. The staff are committed to creating a happy and safe learning environment for the children.
- The parents' association will provide regular information and training to parents in relation to bullying. (Information in relation to other talks and presentations is also made available to parents.
- Children are encouraged to "tell" in confidence, as early as possible. Confidentiality is assured except when to do so could result in harm to themselves or others. The three "R"s are specifically taught ie Recognise, Respond and Report.
- Children will be encouraged to say "No" to bullying behaviour. They will also be made aware of the difference between telling tales about minor incidents and telling to stay safe or keep others safe.
- The **CALM** Method is specifically taught ie **C**ool down, **A**ssert yourself, **L**ook them in the eye and **M**ean it.
- Students will be reminded that if they feel uncomfortable talking to the teacher for fear others would hear, a note left on teachers table will prompt a more discrete conversation.
- Development of a mutually respectful and friendly atmosphere between pupil/pupil and pupil/teacher.
- Pupils are advised that a joke is not a joke unless it is funny to everyone and it is no longer a joke when a person is getting annoyed or upset.
- Pupils will be encouraged to use phrases like "please do not do that again", and "do not do that, I don't like it."
- We will hold annual events including *Anti Bullying Awareness Week and Friendship Week*.
- Bullying, including Cyber Bullying will be addressed formally in our bullying programme as part of the SPHE curriculum.
- Teachers will refer to class/school rules regularly.
- Staff members will attend relevant training when provided. The PDST provided whole school training to the staff in 2013 and 2018 and on-going courses are attended by Ms Moylan annually.
- Bullying is not a problem schools can solve on their own. Parents need to :-
  - a. Be good role models for children and young people.
  - b. Teach young people to respect and value difference and diversity.
  - c. Make it their business to know what bullying is and understand the different types and forms of bullying.
  - d. Educate themselves in relation to social media and take an active interest in how children and young people are using the internet, social media and mobile phones.
  - e. Know, and lookout for, the signs that a child or young person may be being bullied or may be engaged in bullying behaviour.
  - f. Offer support and listen to what a child or young person wants you to do to help.
  - g. Attend the training provided by the School Management/Parents Association annually.
  - h. Familiarise themselves with and co-operate with the procedures for reporting bullying behaviour.

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**Appendix 1** Contains suggestions made by the student anti-bullying policy group. These may from time to time be used in isolation, or as part of the schools Anti Bullying Awareness Week.

**Appendix 2** contains information for parents on bullying including some useful websites.

**Appendix 3** *Informal Recording of Bullying Behaviour Template*.

**Appendix 4** Our condensed **School Policy Pupil Version** (condensed form as per School Journal).

**Appendix 5** School Pledge (as per School Journal).

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 (see Section 6.8 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*) :  
As per complaints procedure policy the following are the steps to take when approaching the school for intervention/support.

1. Should a parent/guardian have any concerns which need to be discussed an appointment should be made through the office to arrange a meeting at a mutually convenient time. This ensures that all concerns are dealt with in a dignified and meaningful manner, without infringing on valuable teaching time. Under no circumstances should a parent approach a child in the school grounds with the purpose of resolving any issues.
2. If a student of this school is reported as having engaged in bullying behaviour outside of school, all efforts are made to encourage the reporter to engage in meaningful resolution with the parents of the student. If this is not possible, the child and parents are informed of the report. Under no circumstances, in the event of bullying behaviour outside of school, will the school become involved in a mediation process between both parties.
3. When investigating and dealing with bullying, teachers will
  - a. Use *Restorative Practise* for investigating conflict, where the children are invited to make a Victim/Impact Statement where they describe the effect of their behaviour and discuss how matters may be resolved along with a plan for making amends.
  - b. Investigate incidents, where possible, outside of the classroom setting. Sanctions, according to the Schools Code of Behaviour will be used.
  - c. Utilise the Detention facility.
  - d. Will speak to the children involved including members of a gang, making it clear that bullying pupils who reform get a "clean sheet" and are praised for doing the right and honourable thing according to our "Bully Free Starts With Me" school slogan.
  - e. Complete an *Informal Recording of Bullying Behaviour Template* and report it to principal. This form is filled out in the presence of the parents. A plan of action and decisions are agreed and a review date is set for a month after the meeting, where the parents will meet with the teacher again.
  - f. Inform parents of both parties when it has been determined that bullying is on-going i.e. if the issue is not resolved after the Action Plan (decided upon on completion of *Informal Record of Bullying*) has been put into place.
  - g. On cessation of bullying, check with child regularly that no further difficulties have arisen. Support will be given on the form of individual or group lessons on self-esteem, respect, coping strategies and anger management. These are generally carried out by the class teacher but on occasion support may be sought from SEN (Special Educational Needs) team or Principal.
  - h. Keep Parents and Principal informed of progress to promote cooperative help and support.
  - i. Direct the Parents, if issue cannot be resolved, to make a referral to Board of Management.

A formal recording of Bullying Behaviour Template will be filled out if the Board of Management deem it to be a case of bullying.

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Remember, bullying is a learned behaviour and therefore it can be unlearned. Most children, with help and support can overcome this problem. In our school we try to identify behaviour and assess frequency and seriousness of situation.

The themes of Antibullying Weeks to date are:-

- 2012 *“All that is necessary for evil to succeed is for good men to do nothing”* by Edmond Burke (The Role of the Enabler)
- 2013 Bystander Power
- 2014 Bully Free Starts With Me (The role of the Upstander)
- 2015 The three R's – Recognise, Report, Respond.
- 2016 Be an Upstander, not a Bystander.
- 2017 My Safety On Screen and Off Screen.
- 2018 Restorative Language

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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*) :

- Ending the Bullying Behaviour.
- Restorative Practise Teacher Course Level 1 and 2.
- Restorative Conversations and Circles to maintain good relationships and resolve conflict.
- Annual Anti Bullying Awareness Week to foster more respect, empathy and support for bullied pupils and all pupils.
- Friendship Fortnight.
- Stay Safe Programme. ([www.staysafe.ie](http://www.staysafe.ie))
- Prim Ed Bullying Programme: Identify, Cope, Prevent.
- Social Personal Health Education (Walk Tall Programme, Zippys Friends Programme, Fun Friends Programme, SALT Programme, Friends for Life Programme).
- Relationship and Sexuality Education
- Prim Ed Cyber Bullying Programme: Bullying in a Cyber World
- New 6<sup>th</sup> Class Programme.
- Zeeko Online Safety (pupil parent and teacher seminar).
- Alive O Programme and Grow in Love Programme.
- Initiatives such as Student Council Worry Box and Student Council Happy Box will be utilised at different times during the year.
- Focused Writing Pieces; Upstander Reports, "What I would like my teacher to know".
- Designated yard area for those who can't find their friend as required.
- School journal contains school rules and information on bullying and strategies to deal with it.

## **8. Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils**

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies and practices are in place during school time 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 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 Board of Management on December 9<sup>th</sup> 2013.

11. 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.

12. 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: \_\_\_\_\_ Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Chairperson of Board of Management) (Principal)

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

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

Date of next review: \_\_\_\_\_

## **Appendix 1**

The following testimonies about our Anti Bullying Policy were submitted by the pupils of Scoil Mhuire Naofa

Student Council Group

Strategies to prevent bullying:

Some suggestions which the students came up with to help prevent bullying were as follows:

- The pupils were happy to report that the “Ca Bhfuil mo chara” zones in the yard were effective in preventing any students from becoming isolated in the yard or targets for bullying behaviour. The student policy group agreed that they would take the lead in this respect if such isolation was occurring and invite such pupils to play. They noted that Second Class required a “Ca bhfuil mo chara” sign.
- The pupils suggested that each boy should sign up to an anti-bullying charter or contract. In it they would make a commitment not to engage in bullying behaviour (which would be defined in the contract). If such negative behaviour took place on their parts it would be shown to them and the fact that they broke their contract be made known. They felt that every class from 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> should partake in this initiative.
- Last year the pupils requested that there be an anti-bullying wrist band with a strong colour eg. Red, available for each boy. These wrist bands would then be earned by all students. They would need to engage in as much positive behaviour as possible before earning the wrist bands to wear. On discussion it was noted that the cost factor was too high for this initiative and the pupils suggested that perhaps loom bands could be used to create a similar effect. They will give further discussion to this during the year.
- The pupils were satisfied that funds were used for Anti Bullying signage after last years suggestion by them that lots of posters always be displayed in the school which show that the school says ‘No to bullying’ and does not tolerate it.
- The pupils were satisfied that in class, lots of lessons educating pupils about bullying are being covered as this enhances awareness about the negative impact of bullying on a school environment.

On occasions when it was believed that bullying behaviour was taking place – the following were suggestions given by student policy group on how to tackle the problem.

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### **Strategies to tackle bullying behaviour when it occurs:**

- When witnessed on the yard, the pupils believed that it was important everyone took the onus to show they wouldn't tolerate negative bullying behaviour, even if they were not the victims/ targets of the negative behaviour. It was agreed that it needs to be nipped in the bud when seen. All agreed 'Don't be the spectator' – tell and stop it before it's serious.
- It was agreed that bullying can escalate if it's dealt with in the wrong way. The pupils agreed that victims of bullying behaviour shouldn't look to get revenge. Their revenge could be 'telling'.
- The policy group felt that certain pupils should be assigned the task of 'keeping their ear to the ground', regarding what's going on in the yard. They felt that these pupils should be responsible for reporting back to their respective class teachers on any negative behaviour they saw occurring and provide evidence. Some pupils thought that the latter should have notebooks and write down what they saw on the yard – but discreetly.
- It was agreed that every support should be given to the victims of bullying behaviour when it occurred. It was felt by some however that the 'bully' needs to be supported or befriended. One boy suggested that when bullying or serious bullying incidents occur – pupils shouldn't exclude the bully and even one of the latter's peers could make a big effort to talk to the 'bully' and try and understand why he behaves the way he does so as that the problem could be worked on.

As a point to note - the facilitator – Brid Kenny, made a point that she specifically allowed the student body group to come up with all ideas by brainstorming their thoughts. She didn't wish to negate ideas or suggest ideas to the students therefore all of the above come from the pupils themselves.

It was suggested that a waterproof Yard Worry Box be placed in every yard.

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**Appendix 2**

**UNDERSTANDING CYBER-BULLYING:**

- Cyber bullying is the use of ICT (usually a mobile phone and or the internet) to abuse another person
- It can take place anywhere and involve many people
- Anybody can be targeted including pupils and school staff
- It can include threats, intimidation, harassment, cyber-stalking, vilification, defamation, exclusion, peer rejection, impersonation, unauthorized publication of private information or images etc.
- While bullying involves a repetition of unwelcome behaviour the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools, September 2013, states:  
2.1.3. In addition, in the context of these procedures 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.

**WHAT IS CYBER-BULLYING?**

There are many types of cyber-bullying. The more common types are:

1. Text messages – can be threatening or cause discomfort. Also included here is ‘Bluejacking’ (the sending of anonymous text messages over short distances using bluetooth wireless technology)
2. Picture/video-clips via mobile phone cameras – images sent to others to make the victim feel threatened or embarrassed
3. Mobile phone calls – silent calls, abusive messages or stealing the victim’s phone and using it to harass others, to make them believe the victim is responsible
4. Emails – threatening or bullying emails, often sent using a pseudonym or somebody else’s name
5. Chat room bullying – menacing or upsetting responses to children or young people when they are in a web-based chat room
6. Instant messaging (IM) – unpleasant messages sent while children conduct real-time conversations online using MSM (Microsoft Messenger), Yahoo Chat or similar tools
7. Bullying via websites – use of defamatory blogs (web logs), personal websites and online personal ‘own web space’ sites such as You Tube, Facebook, Ask.fm, Bebo (which works by signing on in one’s school, therefore making it easy to find a victim) and Myspace – although there are others.

Explanation of slang terms used when referring to cyber-bullying activity:

1. ‘Flaming’: Online fights using electronic messages with angry and vulgar language
2. ‘Harassment’: Repeatedly sending offensive, rude, and insulting messages
3. ‘Cyber Stalking’: Repeatedly sending messages that include threats of harm or are highly intimidating or engaging in other on-line activities that make a person afraid for his or her own safety
4. ‘Denigration’: ‘Dissing’ someone online. Sending or posting cruel gossip or rumors about a person to damage his or her reputation or friendships
5. ‘Impersonation’: Pretending to be someone else and sending or posting material online that makes someone look bad, gets her/him in trouble or danger, or damages her/his reputation or friendships
6. ‘Outing and Trickery’: Tricking someone into revealing secret or embarrassing information which is then shared online
7. ‘Exclusion’: Intentionally excluding someone from an on-line group, like a ‘buddy list’

This list is not exhaustive and the terms used continue to change.

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Appendix 3

Informal Recording of Bullying Behaviour Template

Name and Class of Pupil being bullied

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

Names and Classes of pupils engaged in Bullying Behaviour

Name	Class	Name	Class

Brief Description of Bullying Behavior and its impact:

Plan of Action

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ (Teacher) Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Principal/Deputy) Date \_\_\_\_\_

Actions Needed after 4 weeks. (please ✓ )

<u>No further action required</u>		<u>Formal Template for recording bullying to be completed.</u>	
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Appendix 4

## Bullying

Bullying is when someone repeatedly and on purpose says or does mean or hurtful things to another who has a hard time defending himself or herself. *(Dan Olweus)*

<div style="background-color: red; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"><b>The 3 R's To Bully Prevention</b></div> <p><b>R</b>ecognise</p> <p><b>R</b>eport</p> <p><b>R</b>espond</p>	<div style="border: 2px solid red; padding: 10px;"><p style="font-size: 2em; margin: 0;">NO</p><p style="font-size: 2em; margin: 0;">ZONE</p></div>	<div style="background-color: red; color: white; padding: 5px; text-align: center;"><b>Calm Strategy</b></div> <p><b>C</b>alm Down</p> <p><b>A</b>ssert yourself</p> <p><b>L</b>ook them in the eye</p> <p><b>M</b>ean It</p>
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- ✓ Be an Upstander not a Bystander
- ✓ If you don't report it you support it
- ✓ Report via the spoken word- Tell your teacher or trusted adult
- ✓ Report via the written word - Put note on Teachers desk or in School Worry Box

Appendix 5

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## School Pledge



- ✓ I will speak up
- ✓ I will model good behaviour
- ✓ I will accept others for their difference

Príomhoide: Anne Marie Moylan  
L. Príomhoide: Val Quigley

Chairperson:  
Secretary:

Maurice O'Donoghue  
Margot Hartnett

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### **INFORMATION FOR PUPILS:**

If you are being personally bullied or cyber-bullied

- Remember, bullying is never your fault. It can be stopped and it can usually be traced.
- Don't ignore the bullying. Tell someone you trust, such as a teacher or parent or call an advice line.
- Try to keep calm. If you are frightened, try to show it as little as possible. Don't get angry, it will only make the person bullying you more likely to continue.
- Don't give out your personal details online – if you are in a chat room, do not say where you live, the school you go to, your email address etc. All these things can help someone who wants to harm you to build up a picture about you.
- Keep and save any bullying emails, text messages or images. Then you can show them to a parent or teacher as evidence.
- If you can, make a note of the time and date bullying messages or images were sent, and note any details about the sender
- There is plenty of online advice on how to react to cyber bullying. For example, [ie.reachout.com](http://ie.reachout.com) and [www.wiredsafety.org](http://www.wiredsafety.org) have some useful tips.

### **Text/video messaging**

- You can easily stop receiving text messages for a while by turning-off incoming messages for a couple of days. This might stop the person texting you by making them believe you've changed your phone number
- If the bullying persists, you can change your phone number. Ask your mobile service provider about this.
- Don't reply to abusive or worrying text or video messages.
- Your mobile service provider will have a number for you to ring or text to report phone bullying. Visit their website for details.
- Don't delete messages from cyber bullies. You don't have to read them, but you should keep them as evidence.

### **Useful Websites:**

[www.childnet.int.org](http://www.childnet.int.org)

[www.kidsmart.org.uk/beingsmart](http://www.kidsmart.org.uk/beingsmart)

[www.bbc.co.uk./schools/bullying](http://www.bbc.co.uk./schools/bullying)

[www.childline.ie/index.php/support/bullying/1395](http://www.childline.ie/index.php/support/bullying/1395)

[www.chatdanger.com](http://www.chatdanger.com)

[www.kidpower.org](http://www.kidpower.org)

[www.antibullying.net](http://www.antibullying.net)

<http://ie.reachout.com>

[www.abc.tcd.ie](http://www.abc.tcd.ie)

[www.sticksandstones.ie](http://www.sticksandstones.ie)

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