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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 pupils. 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.

An 'Anti-Bullying Team,' made up of a staff committee, a parents committee and the student council, exists 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 who has been targeted) and resolving the issues and restoring the relationships involved insofar as is practicable using Restorative Practice.

All pupils are expected to contribute to the creation and maintenance of 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 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:
o   is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
o   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)

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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:

o   build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils;

o   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.

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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)
- 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*.

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)

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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 YouTube, Facebook, Snapchat, etc..

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.]

Useful Website: https://www.webwise.ie,

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.

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 resources, such as the Prim-Ed Antibullying programme and https://www.webwise.ie 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 school disseminates information regarding real time and online training and to parents in relation to bullying.
- 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 and become an upstander not a bystander. 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 the teacher's table will prompt a more discreet conversation.
- Through the embedding of Restorative Practices in school, the development of a mutually respectful and friendly atmosphere is promoted and conflict is handled in a healthy and restorative way..
- We will hold annual events including _Anti Bullying Awareness Week & Friendship Week._
- Bullying, including Cyber Bullying will be addressed formally as part of the SPHE curriculum.
- 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 the leadership team 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.   Become aware of the dangers of cyberbullying and attend training.
h.   Familiarise themselves with, and co-operate with the procedures for reporting bullying behaviour.

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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:

i)Should a parent/guardian have any concerns which need to be discussed an appointment should be made via the teacher's email to arrange a meeting at a mutually convenient time. This ensures that concerns are dealt with in a dignified and meaningful manner. Under no circumstances should a parent approach a child in the school grounds with the purpose of resolving any issues.

ii)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.

iii) Following a report of bullying teachers will follow the procedure as outlined:

a) The teacher will listen to the account of the conflict from the person reporting and, following investigation, will decide if it is consistent with the Department of Education and Skills' definition of bullying (see point 3). The teacher will outline the procedure for handling bullying, which is according to the school's restorative practice approach, to the parents. This meeting is recorded and the principal is informed.

b) Each person involved in the bullying incident will have individual meetings with the relevant teacher. They will be asked the six restorative questions. The teacher will listen, reassure and prepare them for the Restorative Meeting with the pupils, which will follow the same format that they will already be familiar with from role playing them in class.

c)During the Restorative Meeting, the six questions will be asked of each pupil involved. Each pupil will have equal time to talk and listen, to problem solve and plan a solution. Relevant and meaningful amends will be made. In some instances there will also be a sanction. The teacher will facilitate the meeting, being mindful of the wellbeing of the pupils and will offer support throughout.

d) The teacher will inform parents of the outcome of the meeting and the action plan will be outlined. The situation will be closely monitored. A date for a follow up meeting with the parents will be set.

e) The teacher will have regular informal check-ins with the pupils following the restorative meeting to ensure that the plan is being followed and to offer extra support if required. At a class level there will be relevant lessons delivered to the class, restorative circles facilitated, and a renewal of commitment to being an upstander and a reporter.

f) Within 4 weeks, a parent teacher meeting will be held. Satisfaction or non satisfaction with the process will be recorded and further action may be planned by the teacher. If the parent remains dissatisfied and believes that the bullying is still ongoing in school, they may be invited by the principal to make a formal report of bullying.

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 the

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frequency and seriousness of each situation. We aim to give equal support to all children to overcome bullying, supporting and developing improved resilience and mental health.

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*):

- Restorative Practice Teacher Training and upskilling.
- 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 Week.
- Stay Safe Programme. (www.staysafe.ie)
- Prim Ed Bullying Programme: Identify, Cope, Prevent.
- Social Personal Health Education (Walk Tall Programme, Zippy's Friends Programme, Fun Friends Programme, SALT Programme, Friends for Life Programme).
- Relationship and Sexuality Education
- Prim Ed cyberbullying programme: Bullying in a Cyber World
- 'Get Up Stand Up' programme.
- 'Zeeko' online safety pack.
- 'Grow in Love' programme.
- Student Council representing the 'voice of the pupils'
- Worry Box in each class.
- Focused Writing Pieces; Bullying Sociograms, Upstander Reports, "What I would like my teacher to know".
- Designated yard area for those who can't find their friend as required, 'Cá bhfuil mo Chara'.
- School journal contains school rules and the condensed Anti bullying Policy

8. Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils

The Board of Management confirms that appropriate supervision and monitoring policies/systems are in place during school time as a preemptive protective factor to safeguard the pupils and 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 is adopted by the Board of Management.

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.

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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 *Anti-bullying Week Themes*
Appendix 3 Our condensed **School Policy Pupil Version** (condensed form as per School Journal).
Appendix 4 School Pledge (as per School Journal).
Appendix 5 School Sociogram

Appendix 1

The following testimonies about our Anti Bullying Policy were submitted by our Student Council 2019/2020

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Pupil Feedback:

- ✔ 5th classes has completed both the Bullying Sociogram and Friendship/Anti-Bullying Questionnaire.
- ✔ All student council member's think they are a good idea. "You can spill the beans to the teacher without others listening."
- ✔ Maybe a simpler version for Juniors to First Class? Change the wording.
- ✔ What about things that happen outside of school? Include them?
- ✔ How often should we complete the sociogram? Monthly.
- ✔ Main concern… others finding out what you've said. If you report something a popular kid did then others might not want to talk to you.
- ✔ Best way to complete them… Give them out to all the class… they would take a lot of time to do individually.

- ✔ **"Cá Bhfuil Mo Chara?" Zones.** Student opinion split. 12 members felt that we should reintroduce the zones. An example of why they should be reintroduced - one member of the student council used the zone in first class and is now best friends with the boy that came over to the zone to ask him to play. 7 members felt that the zones should not be reintroduced. They feel that the zones might highlight you.

- ✔ Anti-bullying charter/contract. They are no good if they are forgotten about.

- ✔ WorryBox: They feel that we should bring back the worry box system within classrooms instead.

- ✔ Anti-Bullying signage. The majority of members feel they are not as visible as they used to be. "We should put them back up and properly, so they don't keep falling down."
- ✔ Lessons educating pupils about bullying. Classes should cover the topic regularly and every day during Anti-Bullying week.
- ✔ The pupils suggested that we add the sociograms to the policy.

Teacher Feedback:

- ✔ Complete sociogram termly. (Perhaps a shortened version of the sociogram could be completed monthly). Provide a space on the sheet for the pupil's name.
- ✔ Complete Friendship/Anti-Bullying Questionnaire monthly.
- ✔ They have proven to be informative and helpful.

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Appendix 2

The themes of Anti Bullying 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

2019   Roots of Empathy

2020   We all stand together

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Appendix 3

Condensed School Policy:

Bullying

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

The 3 R's To Bullying Prevention

Recognise

Report

Respond

NO BULLY ZONE

CALM Strategy

Calm Down

Assert yourself

Look them in the eye

Mean it

Be an Upstander and 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 teacher's desk or in the School Worry Box

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Appendix 5

School Pledge:

School Pledge

Bullying

✔ I will speak up

✔ I will model good behaviour

✔ I will accept others for their difference

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Appendix 6

School Sociogram

Bullying Sociogram

·   Are you happy with the atmosphere in your classroom?

·   Who are your friends?

·   Are you being bullied in any way? (Take details and reassure student that the problem will be addressed).

·   Is there anyone in class having a hard time or being picked on?

·   Is anyone being left out, ignored?

·   Is anyone spreading rumours, gossip, using notes, phone calls, text messages, or emails to make others feel bad about themselves?

·   Is anyone being unfair to others?

·   Is there a group of pupils making life difficult for others?

·   Are pupils from other classes giving anyone in this class a hard time?

·   Can you give examples?

·   Who do you think is causing the problem?

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The Board of Management (the Board) 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.

	Yes /No
Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*?	Y
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	Y
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	Y
Is the Board 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?	Y
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	Y
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	Y
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	Y
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	Y
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	Y
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	Y
Has the Board 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 Board?	Y
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	N
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	N
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	N
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?	N/A
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	Y
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	Y

Signed _Maeoor Hadwell_   Date _27/9/21_
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _Anne Weeu Woga_   Date _27-9-21._
Principal

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To: _Parents / Staff / Pupils_

The Board of Management of _Scoil Mhuire_ _____ wishes to inform you that:
Naofa

o The Board of Management's annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation was completed at the Board meeting of _27 - 9 - 21_ [date].

o 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 _Margot Hazlett_   Date _27/9/21_
Chairperson, Board of Management

Signed _Ann Marie Moyla_   Date _27 - 9 - 21_
Principal

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