



## **Scoil Iósaif Naofa Anti Bullying Policy**

### **1. Introduction**

Children First National Guidance 2017 outlines that bullying can be defined as repeated aggression – whether it be verbal, psychological or physical – that is conducted by an individual or group against others.

Children First National Guidance 2017 describes bullying as behaviour that is intentionally aggravating and intimidating, and occurs mainly among children in social environments such as schools. It includes behaviours such as physical aggression, cyber bullying, damage to property, intimidation, isolation/exclusion, name calling, malicious gossip and extortion.

Bullying can also take the form of identity abuse based on gender, sexual preference, race, ethnicity and religious factors. With developments in modern technology, children can also be the victims of non-contact bullying, via mobile phones, the internet and other personal devices.

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the NEWB (TUSLA), the Board of Management of Scoil Iósaif 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.

Children First National Guidance 2017 and the Anti-Bullying Procedures provide that in cases of serious instances of bullying where the behaviour is regarded as possibly abusive, a referral may need to be made to Tusla or An Garda Síochána as appropriate. Where school personnel have concerns about a child arising from alleged bullying behaviour but are not sure whether to report the matter to TUSLA, the designated liaison person shall seek advice from Tusla in accordance with the procedures set out in Chapter 5 of Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools 2017.

The Board of Management of Scoil Iósaif Naofa 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:

## **2. Key Principles**

(a) 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

(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;
- effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;

(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. What is Bullying**

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 a certain ethnic 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* and **Appendix 1** of this document

#### **4. The relevant teacher(s)**

for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows:

All class teachers

Deputy Principal

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 transphobic 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*):

- 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 develops 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 and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities. Non-teaching and ancillary staff will 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.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and shared with all parents/guardians.

- The school's anti-bullying policy will be available to view on school website and is available from the office on request.
  - The implementation of regular whole school awareness measures may include:
    - Friendship Week (Children will be taught strategies to help resolve conflict e.g. SALT- Stop, Ask, Listen. Talk)
    - Questionnaires/surveys in senior classes
    - Affirming good behaviour around the school
    - Agreed whole school time-tabling of lessons on anti-bullying
    - Assemblies
  - NEPS programmes e.g. Friends For Life, Zippy's Friends, Get Up Stand Up
  - Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. 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, e.g.:
- Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
  - Hand note up with homework.
  - Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
  - Administer a confidential questionnaire to pupils in senior classes.
- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
  - Teachers should repeatedly reinforce the message that if anyone is the victim of bullying behaviour, they should not retaliate in any way, but they should tell an adult. Victims should be reassured that if they tell, something will be done about the bullying in a safe manner and all reported incidents will be dealt with.
  - Class lessons to be provided to enable pupils 'how to tell 'telling protocol'
  - Up standers can be the key to resolving bullying and if anyone witnesses bullying behaviour, they should always tell a teacher. This is not telling tales but a means of protecting victims.

### **Implementation of curricula-**

- The full implementation of the SPHE, RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes.
- School wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence based programmes, e.g. Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme, Prim-Ed Anti- Bullying-Identify, Prevent, Cope, Anti-bullying Campaign.ie, Be Safe-Be Web Wise, HTML Heroes, Prim- Ed Cyber-Bullying Programme , Friends For Life etc.
- Talks delivered by the Community Guard, 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 Safeguarding Statement
- Special Educational Needs

- ICT and Acceptable Use Policy
- Health and Safety

## **6. Procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying behaviour.**

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);

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) and guardian(s)) understand this approach from the outset.

### **Reporting bullying behaviour**

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher using a 3 step approach.
- 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;

### **Investigating and dealing with incidents: Style of approach**

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will 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 restoring, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible;
  - Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.
  - Where possible incidents should be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;
  - 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;
1. What happened?
  2. What were you thinking at the time?
  3. What have you thought about since?



4. Who has been affected by what you have done? In what way?

5. What do you need to do to make things right?

- 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)

### **Stage 1**

- The relevant teacher speaks to individuals concerned to establish chain of events and whether bullying has occurred. (See Section 6.8.9 of *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* for detailed steps on how to conduct an investigation). In the case of suspected bullying the relevant teacher will keep written records of the case.

### **Stage 2**

- 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 practical the relationships of the parties involved. The teacher will establish a plan of action on how to resolve the issues within the next 20 school days. , Parents/guardians of all parties concerned will be contacted by the relevant teacher to inform them of the incident, findings and the plan of action for the next 20 school days. These records are stored on Aladdin under Behaviour Reports. This period of time gives the child who was engaging in bullying behaviour a time to change.
- When the 20 school day period has elapsed the relevant teacher will determine whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed. In doing so the relevant teacher must, 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.

### Stage 3 –

- In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately resolved by the children within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must be recorded by the relevant teacher in the recording template provided. (Appendix 3 of *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* ) and inform the Principal.
- Should the relevant teacher require the support of the Principal and/or Deputy Principal at any point in the procedure, the relevant teacher should discuss the case with the Principal/Deputy Principal. Where appropriate the Principal/Deputy Principal can proceed with the case. The relevant teacher shall be included in all further stages of the procedures.
- The purpose of these procedures is to resolve the bullying behaviour so that it stops, rather than apportioning blame. Below are intervention strategies that will be used.

### Intervention Strategies

- If it is deemed necessary that sanctions be implemented, the relevant teacher shall refer to the school's Code of Behaviour.
- A behaviour plan is implemented for the child who has been deemed to be bullying. The aim of this is to reward positive behaviour and to encourage the child to make positive choices in his/her behaviour towards other children. A trusted adult can act as a mentor to encourage positive behaviour in this child in the future.
- In relation to bullying in schools, *Children First National Guidance for the Protection and Welfare of Children 2011* (Children First) and the *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* provide that in situations where "the incident is serious and where the behaviour is regarded as potentially abusive, the school must consult the HSE Children and Family Social Services with a view to drawing up an appropriate response, such as a management plan".
- Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
- In the event that a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

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

**Victims**

- Victims are reassured from the outset that they are not to blame.
- Strategies for restoring self-esteem are explored between teacher and parents/guardians.  
Where deemed necessary, counselling may be recommended.
- Staged approach- class support, school support( as per Continuum -Behavioural, Emotional and Social difficulties- NEPS).
- The parents of the pupils concerned will be advised to contact the local Gardaí if appropriate.

**Children who engage in bullying behaviour.**

- If pupils require counselling of 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 involved in the bullying behaviour.  
Staged approach - class support, school support (as per *Continuum-Behavioural, Emotional and Social Difficulties*- NEPS)
- Incidents of bullying can extend beyond the school and the journey to and from school is one which can provide particular opportunities for bullying to occur. The school's policy could be given to those who are closely involved at this stage so that if bullying behaviour is witnessed by them, that they may report it to the school.
- In certain cases too it may be necessary to invite assistance from formal agencies such as Gardaí, Tusla, NEPS
- The school will constantly remind parents of the dangers of "cyber- bullying" as can happen with the use of social networking sites and mobile phones. We also direct their attention to the school's internet Acceptable Use Policy (AUP).
- The school cannot be responsible for disagreements between pupils that happen outside the school grounds but will make reasonable efforts to cooperate with parents in assisting them to resolve the issues.
- 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.
- Conflict Resolution Programme
- SPHE Programmes e.g. Walk Tall, Zippy's Friends,



- NEPS – Friends For Life, Incredible Years, Get Up. Stand Up etc.
- Play / Art Therapy
- The National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS)
- 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 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 relevant teacher.

## **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.

## **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 was reviewed and updated by the Board of Management on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2020.

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel and is published on the school website. It is also available on request. 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 is available on request. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed:



Chairperson of Board of Management

Date:

17/12/2020.

The full policy including appendices is available from the office on request.