Scoil Naomh Pio
Anti-bullying Policy

The Anti-Bullying Policy of Scoil Naomh Pio was reviewed and updated in 2021 by the teaching staff and the Board of Management, in consultation with parents, guardians and pupils in the senior classes. The Anti-Bullying Policy operates in conjunction with our Code of Behaviour in which is used to address isolated incidents of anti-social behaviour.

▪ Rationale

"Bullying behaviour, by its very nature, undermines and dilutes the quality of education and imposes psychological damage. As such it is an issue that must be positively and firmly addressed though a range of school-based measures and strategies through which all members of the school community are enabled to act effectively in dealing with this behaviour." (Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour in Primary and Post Primary Schools, DES, 1993)

Scoil Naoimh Pio school reviewed its Code of Behaviour and the Anti-Bullying Policy was identified as a priority area for review.

▪ Relationship to characteristic spirit of the school

In Scoil Naoimh Pio

- The school strives to promote a positive ethos based on the quality of relationships between all members of the school community. Our Code of Behaviour provides a framework within which positive techniques of motivation and encouragement are utilised by the teachers.
- Through our Anti-Bullying Policy and our Code of Behaviour we strive to provide a positive, caring environment where every child is safe and happy.

▪ Aim:

By putting this Anti-Bullying Policy in place we hope

- To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with the whole school community: the school's Board of Management, the teaching and non-teaching staff, the pupils and their parents/guardians.
- To create a school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To outline, promote and raise awareness of preventative approaches that can be used in response to reported incidents of bullying.
- To ensure supervision through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation.
- To outline procedures for reporting and documenting incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To outline procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.
- To implement a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour.

- To develop links with appropriate agencies in counteracting all forms of bullying behaviour (National Education Psychological Service)

▪ <u>Guidelines:</u>

An awareness of both the indications of bullying and the reasons why children bully is essential if the school community is to deal with this area effectively.

1. <u>What is bullying behaviour?</u>

Department of Education and Skills guidelines define bullying as <u>*"deliberate, repeated acts of aggression, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against others. Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, which should not be condoned, can scarcely be described as bullying. However, when the behaviour is systematic and ongoing it is bullying.*"</u> (Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour in Primary and Post Primary school 1993)

Examples of bullying are:

Verbal:
- Name calling
- Hurtful, insulting or humiliating remarks about a child's appearance, ability, family, race or religion.
- Spreading mean, hurtful or untrue gossip or rumours about an individual.
- Threats

Psychological (emotional):
- Deliberately excluding or isolating a child.
- Intimidation
- Extortion
- Belittling someone's efforts
- Ganging up on an individual

Physical:
- Hitting, pushing, shoving, pinching, tripping, punching, kicking, pulling hair, gesturing, spitting, rough play.
- Interference with or damage to a child's possessions, example: books, money, lunch or clothing.
- Forcing another child to do something for the bully such as homework etc.

Cyber-Bullying:
- Abusive phone/text messages, emails, web pages.
- Chat rooms
- Social networking sites.

When any of these behaviours are noted in isolation, they are dealt with as misdemeanors under the school **Code of Behaviour**. Where the behaviour happens repeatedly, they are recorded as ongoing and considered as bullying incidents.

2. Indications of Bullying
"Each school must raise the awareness of bullying in its school community so that they are more alert to its harmful effects." (Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour in Primary and Post Primary Schools, 1993)

Children may:
- Become reluctant to go to school, particularly after the weekend or the school holidays, or to go out to the yard.
- Ask to be accompanied by an adult to school.
- Change friends, change play or change social habits.
- Become withdrawn, anxious, nervous, tense or evasive.
- Invent excuses, health problems or illnesses.
- Show deterioration in school performance.
- Return home regularly with books, clothes or other possessions damaged or missing.
- Ask for money more often.
- Have unexplained bruises, marks or scratches.
- Develop eating or sleeping problems and/or suffer from depression, bedwetting, nightmares, stammering or self-harm.

These signs may also be indicators of other problems originating elsewhere and such reasons should be eliminated before proceeding.

Why do children bully?
Children become bullies for many reasons, for example they may:
- Feel insecure, lack confidence or suffer low self-esteem.
- Be reacting to painful changes in their lives, for example bereavement or separation.
- Be seeking attention or wanting to appear in control.
- Experience bullying themselves.
- Find it difficult to fit in with other children.
- Feel under pressure to succeed.
- Experience humiliation and in turn humiliate other children.
- Lack boundaries and their behaviour may be going unchallenged at home.
- Be experiencing physical, sexual or emotional abuse.

An awareness of both the indications of bullying and the reasons why children bully is essential if the school community is to deal with this area effectively.

3.   Strategies for Prevention of Bullying
"At the centre of a whole school response to bullying is the creation of a positive school climate which focuses on respect for the individual."   (Guidelines on Countering Bullying Behaviour in Primary and Post Primary School 1993)

In accordance with the school Code of Behaviour, our school seeks to foster each child's self-esteem, sense of responsibility, citizenship and well-being to prevent bullying behaviour from occurring in the first instance.   Parents and the school share a responsibility in the task of equipping the children with a range of skills which will help them in their dealings with others.

The programmes listed below foster self-esteem and self-worth leaving children less susceptible to bullying behaviour. Refer to Appendix 1 to see the listed resources in the school that help support the S.P.H.E. programme above.

- The R.S.E. (Relationships and Sexuality Education) Programme.
- The Stay Safe (Child Abuse Prevention) programme.
- The Walk Tall (Substance Misuse Prevention) programme.
- The Be Safe (National Safety Council) programme.
- The Digital Citizenship programme.

The school has a number of Policies and Procedures for Prevention of Bullying:
- Code of Behaviour
- S.P.H.E. plan
- R.S.E. policy
- Health and Safety policy (including supervision procedures)
- Attendance policy
- Internet Use policy
- Critical Incident policy
- Physical Education policy
- Child Protection Guidelines
- Junior Infant Welcome Pack Booklets (including guidelines for parents)
- Parent Teacher Meetings
- Prize giving ceremonies.
- Classroom slogans.
- Visual arts activities, posters, drama, role play, co-operative games, circle time.
- Special events such as "Friendship Week" or similar.
- Community links.

4. Procedures for reporting and investigating bullying:

Children who encounter any **bullying behaviour** will:

1. Say stop to the person.
2. Walk away.
3. Tell an adult.
4. Keep on telling.
5. Follow the adult's advice.

Children who encounter **cyber bullying** will follow these steps:

1. Don't reply.
2. Keep the message.
3. Block the sender.
4. Tell someone.
5. Keep on telling.

Adults will report and investigate bullying behaviour in the following way:

1. All reports of bullying, no matter how trivial will be noted, investigated and dealt with by teachers. Every teacher has will record on the template Appendix 3.
2. Non-teaching staff such as S.N.A.'s (Special Needs Assistants), the secretary, caretaker and cleaner will report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them or mentioned to them to the appropriate teaching member of staff.
3. Serious cases of bullying behaviour by pupils will be reported immediately to the Principal and recorded.
4. Parents/guardians will be contacted as soon as possible, same day preferably. They are then in a position to help and support their children.

Investigating Bullying:
1. Teachers will take a calm, unemotional, problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour reported by either pupils, staff of parents/guardians.
2. Such incidents will be investigated outside the classroom situation to avoid public humiliation of the victim or pupil engaged in bullying behavioiur.
3. In any incident of bullying, the teacher will speak to the pupils involved in an attempt to resolve the issue.
4. All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned.
5. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way.

6. Parents will be informed.

5. Support measures for the victim after report and investigation:

- Specific parts of the S.P.H.E. programme will be focused on such as Stay Safe and Digital Citizenship.
- The issue of counseling is discussed for the child.
- Closer supervision and monitoring of the child. Buddy system may be considered.
- Ongoing support from Principal/Deputy Principal

Support measures for the bully after report and investigation:

- Specific parts of the S.P.H.E. programme will be focused on such as Stay Safe and Digital Citizenship.
- The issue of counselling is discussed for the child.
- A verbal contract between the child, parents and the school is compiled stating set targets the child has to meet in relation to behaviour. Progress is monitored and reviewed at regular intervals and targets re-evaluated as a result.
- On going support from Principal/Deputy Principal

■ Community links

- The Principal/Deputy Principal will provide ongoing support to families.
- In the case of bullying incidents in the school it is important that discreet contact be made with the club project leader on behalf of the victim in particular. Parents will be informed of this support line. Community agencies may be able to provide counselling for both the victim and the person who is bullying, and their families.
- Outside speaker/facilitators may be invited to address staff, parent groups and/or children on the issue of bullying and prevention or related issues.

■ Success Criteria

This policy will be deemed to be successful when the following are observed:

- Fewer incidents of bullying will occur.
- Positive behaviour in classrooms, playground and school environment are observed using our Heroes in the Hallway initiative.

■ **<u>Roles and Responsibilities</u>**

Board of Management:
"The Board of Management has a role to play in the maintenance of desirable standards of behaviour in a school. It should be supportive of the Principal in the application of a fair code of behaviour within the school." (Circular 20/90)
At Board of Management Meetings the Board is updated by the Principal of all child related matters under "Child Protection". The Board of Management responds with appropriate action as the need arises.

Principal:
The Principal is responsible for the overall implementation of this policy. The Principal supports the staff in its implementation.

Staff:
Every effort will be made by all members of staff, teaching and non-teaching to make our school a safe and enjoyable place of education.
Each teacher is responsible for the implementation of this Anti-Bullying policy in his/her own classroom, while sharing a common responsibility for the whole school in general.
Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate will be used by the staff to implement the policy. See Appendix 2.
We will use our Hero in the Hallway initiative.

Parents:
Scoil Naomh Pio school provides a welcoming atmosphere for parents and recognizes the importance of close co-operation between home and school. Parents play a crucial role in shaping attitudes which produce good behaviour in school." (Code of Behaviour)
Parents are expected to:
- Be familiar with the Code of Behaviour and support its implementation.
- Be familiar with the Anti-Bullying policy and support its implementation.
- Remember the key words: Ask/Listen/Talk/Get help.
- Communicate and work with the school to achieve a resolution.

■ **<u>Implementation</u>**

Roles and responsibilities:
Teaching and non-teaching staff are responsible for the implementation of this Anti-Bullying policy in the school.

Timeframe for implementation:
This revised Anti-Bullying Policy will be implemented from November 2021.

- ■ <u>**Review**</u>

It will be reviewed in June 2021 by all staff and the Board will complete the Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation.

- ■ **Communication**

This plan was presented to the Board of Management for ratification. It will be circulated to all teachers and is implemented in all classes from November 2021. All parents will receive an email of the policy. The full policy will be available at the secretary's office.

- ■ **Ratification:**

The Anti-Bullying Policy was ratified by the Board of Management of Scoil Naomh Pio

Signed: _____

        Chairperson of the Board of Management

Date: _____