



Anti-bullying Policy

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 Nioclás Naofa (Dunmore NS) school 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 positive school culture and climate which
 - i. is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity;
 - ii. encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment; and
 - iii. promotes respectful relationships across the school 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
 - i. build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
 - ii. explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying.
 - Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;
 - 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,
- cyber-bullying 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. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows: (see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):

Throughout this policy document and throughout the DES document "Anti Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post Primary Schools", the term "Relevant Teacher" is used. In order to provide clarity on this point the term "Relevant Teacher" applies to the class teacher (s) in who's classroom, the pupils — who it may be alleged are being bullied, or are engaging in bullying behaviour, - are enrolled.

This does not absolve all other teachers from their duty of care to all the children. Nor does it absolve them from implementing the prudent and professional principles of best practice as regards the reporting of all instances of negative behaviour to the class teacher (s).

The onus for investigating alleged bullying falls, therefore in the main on the class teacher (s). However, all teachers have a professional obligation to supervise the children effectively and to report all instances of negative behaviour to the class teacher initially, and in many circumstances, to the Principal also.

It must be emphasized that an onus also falls on the pupils to tell the teachers either in the classroom or on the yard that an incident has taken place which has made them feel uncomfortable or threatened. Parents have a duty to impress upon their children that respectful behaviour is expected of all children when they are in school, and that the teachers are charged with the responsibility of ensuring that all, who work and learn in school are treated with respect and dignity.

Strategies for the investigation, recording and intervention are outlined later in this document.

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, 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):

Aims:

The aims of this anti-bullying policy are

- To build empathy respect and resilience in pupils
- To develop self-esteem in pupils
- To restore relationships between the parties involved in an incident of bullying, so far as is practicable
- To raise awareness of bullying as a societal problem
- To alert parents and the school community in general of their responsibilities as regards the issue of bullying

Education and Prevention programmes:

The following programmes which deal with bullying in general and specifically with the issues of cyber bullying and identity based bullying, will be used in the school. The lessons are covered at an age appropriate level.

- The Stay Safe Programme (specific lessons on bullying etc.)
- SPHE curriculum units (on relationships, conflict, personal safety etc.)
- Web-Wise (internet safety programme)
- ICT Policy (Acceptable Use Policy)
- Discreet time in English and other curricular subjects dealing with interpersonal relationships, respect etc.
- Religious Education Programme (the central message of the Christian Faith ie. Love and respect for each other)

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):

Investigating and Recording

- a) When an incident occurs, the teacher who observed the incident or to whom the details of the incident were reported, will, as soon as is practicable, report to the relevant teacher(s).
- b) The relevant teacher will contact the Principal/Deputy Principal so that arrangements can be made for the supervision of the relevant teacher's class while a preliminary investigation is undertaken.
- c) The class will be assigned work and the Principal/Deputy Principal/Special Education teachers will supervise the class.
- d) The relevant teacher, in the company of another teacher, will interview the alleged victim first, in a calm atmosphere, in a quiet room e.g. the office, resource room etc.
- e) The relevant teacher will take brief notes to aid recall, and reassure the child that he/she has done the right thing to report the issue.
- f) The teacher who was involved initially, will provide a report at a later date using the official school template (see appendix).
- g) The relevant teacher — in the company of another teacher - will then interview, separately, all those allegedly involved and determine, using his/her professional judgement and with reference to the definition of bullying outlined in this policy, if bullying has occurred.
- h) While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher will use his/her professional judgement in relation to the level of detail which will be recorded on the template.

If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must keep appropriate, detailed written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as practicable, the relationships of the parties involved.

The relevant teacher must use the DES recording template in the Appendix to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:

- 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

- In the case of a critical serious instance of bullying behaviour, which was reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal, as a matter of immediate concern.

- i) If, in the professional judgement of the relevant teacher bullying has not occurred on this occasion, then the relevant teacher will deal with the issue in terms of it being "Negative Behaviour", and refer to the Code of Behaviour. The Principal will be informed of this decision.

Follow up:

- A. If in the professional judgement of the teacher, bullying has occurred, the following steps will be followed:
 - i. The Principal teacher will be fully briefed by the relevant teacher and all records will be given to the Principal by all the teachers.
 - ii. The Principal and relevant teacher will speak to all the children involved, emphasising the support available for the victim and the necessity that issues be resolved, at this early stage by the restoration of relationships between the parties, so far as is practicable.
 - iii. The Principal will telephone the parents of the parties involved, explaining that in this instance, it is the view of the school that bullying has occurred and that it is school policy that they be contacted.

- B. A follow up meeting between the relevant teacher, Principal and parents will be arranged by mutual consent. Parents, at all times, will be informed that, with their help and their support for school policy, the relationship between the parties involved can be restored as far as is practicable.

- C. An oral report of the investigation will be provided for the parents and procedure will be agreed between the school and the parents for the monitoring of the situation. The role and responsibility of the parents in supporting the school will be emphasised at all times.

- D. If it is deemed necessary, that sanctions be applied, these will be a private matter between the pupil, his/her parents and the school. Given the complexity of this issue, it will be prudent to discuss sanctions with parents, so that agreed and effective sanctions can be implemented.

- E. The school will monitor the situation and all teachers will be fully informed as regards the necessity of being extra vigilant on yard duty, on school trips, sports days, etc. where the parties involved will be in contact outside of the classroom.

F. The school will keep in contact with the parents of both parties either to reassure them that the issues around this incident have been resolved, or to inform them that further intervention will be necessary.

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)

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

- Monitoring
- Private/informal chat (at tidy up time) — provide opportunity for a child to speak quietly and informally to the teacher.
- Revision of Targets in SPHE
- Notify the teachers on yard duty in particular that certain children need to be carefully observed due to an issue around bullying.
- Pastoral Care

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.

Teachers will be alerted to the necessity of being extra vigilant at times where the children are using dressing rooms, going to and from the swimming pool on buses or going on any trips outside the school grounds.

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 adopted by the Board of Management on 16/1/23.

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists, is otherwise readily accessible to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association (where one exists). 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 (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.

Signed: Albert Conroy

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: 16th Jan. 2023

Signed: Maura Callinan

(Principal)

Date: Jan. 16th, 2023

Date of next review: Jan 2025

Appendix 2 Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate

The following are some practical tips for immediate actions that can be taken to help build a positive school culture and climate and to help prevent and tackle bullying behaviour.

- Model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community at all times.
- Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.
- Catch them being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN.
- Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.
- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.
- Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use. Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.
- Actively involve parents and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media.
- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.
- Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas. All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- Ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.
- School staff can get pupils to help them to identify bullying “hot spots” and “hot times” for bullying in the school.
- ◇ Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas, changing rooms, corridors and other areas of unstructured supervision.
- ◇ Hot times again tend to be times where there is less structured supervision such as when pupils are in the playground/school yard or moving classrooms.
- Support the establishment and work of student councils.