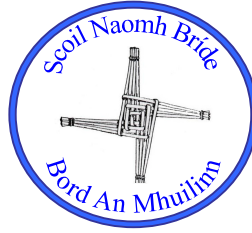


**Scoil Naomh Bríde,
Baile on Bhóthair,
Áth Troim,
Co. na Mí.**



**St. Brigid's N.S.,
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Trim,
Co. Meath.**

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Anti-Bullying Policy

1. Introduction.

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 Scoil Naomh Bríde 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.

Scoil Naomh Bríde 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) A positive school culture and climate which (Section 6.1.5. pg 23 of Procedures)
 - 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.
 - 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 on others
- (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;
- (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)
- (i) On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

2. Definition of Bullying. *(Section 2.1. pg 9 of Procedures)*

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.

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.

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.

Note; see Appendix 1 for examples of bullying behaviour. The list is not exhaustive.

3. Reporting Bullying Behaviour

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.
- Parent’s/Guardians should, in the first instance, report incidents of bullying behaviour, which they might suspect, witness or that has come to their attention to the class teacher.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. In that way pupils will gain confidence in ‘telling’. This confidence factor is of vital importance. 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.
- 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.

4. The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying *(Section 6.8.3 and 6.8.4 pgs 29 and 30 of Procedures)*

In this school the *relevant teacher(s)* for investigating and dealing with bullying will be the class teacher and/or other teaching staff. If the circumstances of bullying are extreme then the Deputy Principal and/or the Principal will become involved immediately.

5. Bullying Behaviour Outside of School Hours

The staff and Board of Management of Scoil Naomh Bríde cannot be expected to solve or address bullying issues or behaviours that happen outside of school hours. If the Principal believes that the bullying behaviour is having a negative impact within the school then the issue will be addressed in line with the school’s Anti-Bullying Policy. It will be at the discretion of the Principal to decide if the behaviour is having a negative effect within the school.

6. Education and Prevention Strategies used in Scoil Naomh Bríde. *(Section 6.5. pgs 26 and 27 of Procedures)*

As a school we are fully committed to raising awareness of Bullying in all its forms and to raising awareness of the effects that Bullying can have on all concerned through the following educational and prevention strategies. Our school's approach to tackling and preventing bullying also takes particular account of the needs of pupils with disabilities or with Special Educational Needs.

School wide approach.

Promoting a school-wide approach to the fostering of respect for all members of the school community by;

- modelling respectful behaviour in the school to all members of the school community at all times.
- displaying key respect messages in and around the school.
- giving constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- acknowledging publically, respectful behaviour when used by the children.
- promoting appropriate respectful behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines through our REF Awards in weekly assemblies.
- providing pupils with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth and in particular to develop their self-esteem through curricular and extra-curricular initiatives and in school assemblies.
- actively promoting the right of every member of the school community to feel safe and secure in school.
- ensuring that all staff watch out for signs of bullying behaviour in and around the school.
- 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 promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping highlighting the unacceptability of bullying behaviour. Teachers will attend professional development if organised by the Department with specific focus on the training of the relevant teacher.
- encouraging a culture of telling while also ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell. In that way pupils will gain confidence in 'telling'. This confidence factor is of vital importance. It will 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.

School initiatives.

- *an Anti – Bullying Week* is organised in the third week of each new term. Classes complete lessons each day during this week as part of SPHE on various aspects of Bullying. Parent's receive a letter from the school informing them of the initiative and encouraging them to sit down and talk with their children re; all aspects of bullying. Parents are encouraged to come to the school and talk with staff re; any concerns they may have. Children receive no general homework on the Wednesday night of Anti-Bullying week. Instead they receive some homework based around the issue of bullying as discussed in the class lessons that week.
- weekly assemblies are organised every Friday at 1.00pm. They give the staff and principal the opportunity to promote, encourage and praise respectful and appropriate behaviour displayed by the pupils. Pupils are also given opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth and to develop their self-esteem through curricular and extra-curricular initiatives and in school assemblies.
- REF Awards are handed out in each class every week and these are also used to reward positive behaviour by the pupils.
- an Anti-Bullying wall display has been created in the school to help develop children's awareness of the causes and effects of bullying. It also encourages them to take appropriate action when they believe that someone may be bullied.

- in Scoil Naomh Bríde we use the services of Accord who come into the school once a year to discuss RSE with the children in 6th Class. This also provides a forum for discussion on some of the issues related to homophobic bullying.
- our local community gardaí are available to come in and speak to the classes each year on aspects of bullying if deemed appropriate by the class teacher.
- our Parents' Association assist in developing initiatives to raise awareness of the dangers of mobile phones, internet etc.
- whole staff professional development, if available, 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.
- development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code, *Be a Buddy, not a Bully*' for the school to be displayed in classrooms and in common areas of the school.
- at the start of every school year the Parent's Association are given a copy of the school's Anti-Bullying policy and they are informed of the official annual audit of the policy by the Board of Management.
- an Acceptable Use Policy has been developed in the school to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored.

Lessons.

- teaching the SPHE programme throughout the whole school using the Stay Safe, Walk Tall and RSE programme of resources.
- teaching pupils about what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- teaching the children about Bullying. This takes place in the third week of each new term during Anti-Bullying Week. It is a structured whole school approach aimed at developing pupils' awareness of and understanding of bullying in all its forms, including its causes and effects.
- teaching *The Stay Safe Programme*, throughout the whole school. This is a personal safety skills programme which seeks to enhance children's self-protection skills including their ability to recognise and cope with bullying. It is organised in the 4th week of each new term.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils at the start of every school year.
- developing the children's knowledge of our school rules. At the start of each new school year the class teachers go through the school rules with the pupils. Pupils are encouraged in a positive way to abide by the rules during the course of the year.
- developing pupil's knowledge of the dangers of texting, social media and in particular the internet and demonstrating how these forms of technology should be used in a positive way.

7. Established intervention strategies that may be used by teachers.

- Teacher interviews with all pupils
- Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process
- Working with parent(s)/guardian(s) to support school interventions
- No Blame Approach
- Circle Time
- Restorative interviews
- Restorative conferencing
- Implementing sociogram questionnaires
- Peer mediation where suitable training has been given

The following are some of the resources used by teachers in our school.

- SPHE curriculum
- Bullying (Prim Ed.)
- Anti- Cyber Bullying Programme (Prim Ed)
- Stay Safe
- Walk Tall
- RSE programme
- Be Safe
- Alive O series
- Bullying (Drumcondra Resource Centre)
- Circle Time (Jenny Mosley)
- Social Stories and activities
- Internet Safety (NCTE)
- Talkabout series of books.

8. Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying *(Section 6.8.9. pgs 31, 32 and 33 of Procedures)*

Teachers are best advised to take a calm, unemotional, problem solving approach when dealing with allegations of bullying behaviour. As highlighted in the Anti-Bullying procedures for Primary Schools, **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 in dealing with and investigating bullying will be consistent with that in mind. Every effort will be made to ensure that pupils and parents/guardians understand this approach from the outset.

Parents/guardians 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.

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the *relevant* teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.
- The 'relevant' teacher investigating cases of bullying behaviour should keep a written record of their discussions with those involved to include the allegation, discussions with those involved and the relevant actions taken, Appendix 2. It may also be appropriate and helpful to ask those involved and/or independent witnesses to write down their account of the incident being investigated. It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner. These will be filed in the Anti-Bullying Incident Report Book.
- Serious cases of bullying behaviour should be referred immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal.
- The 'relevant' teacher may contact parents/guardians at an early stage of their investigation to inform them of the matter. This will provide them with an opportunity 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Where possible incidents should be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved. Local arrangements, if necessary, can be made by the teacher to ensure supervision of classes while this is taking place.
- 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 what has been said.
- 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.

9. Where bullying has occurred.

Where the relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour;

- the relevant teacher must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved. These records should be retained in the Pupils School Profile Folder.
- it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.
- the Principal will be informed and the class teacher and/or the Principal will meet with the parents/guardians of the parties involved as appropriate. The actions being taken by the school, as per the school's Code of Behaviour, will be explained and the parents/guardians will have an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports being provided to the pupils, if necessary.
- it must also be made clear to all involved, each set of pupils and parents/guardians, that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents/guardians and the school.

10. Sanctions to be used by the school when Bullying has occurred

There are no sanctions listed in the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary Schools. It is recommended in the procedures that 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.**

However, sanctions will be applied as deemed appropriate and at the discretion of the relevant class teacher, Principal and/or Board of Management using those outlined in our Code of Behaviour Policy. These include;

- Reasoning/discussing poor behaviour with the pupil.
- Reprimand (including advice on how to improve).
- Temporary separation from peers, friends or others.
- Loss of privileges.
- Detention.
- Prescribing additional work.
- Temporary removal from class to work in another classroom.
- Consequence sheet to inform parents of continuum of minor misdemeanours/serious misdemeanours.
- Referral to Principal.
- Request for meeting with parents.
- Suspension (temporary).
- Expulsion

In cases where the school has serious concerns in relation to managing the behaviour of the pupil, the advice of the National Educational Psychological Service (NEPS) will be sought.

The advice of other services e.g. HSE, CAHMS, SESS etc may also be sought.

11. The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying *(Section 6.8.16. pg 35 of Procedures)*

Scoil Naomh Bríde recognises the impact that Bullying can have on all children. We are committed to supporting the child who has been bullied and also to working with the child who has been bullying. A programme of support for pupils involved in serious bullying may be devised, depending on the context of each incident, through the following programmes of support;

- 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.
 - Pastoral care system
 - Buddy / Peer mentoring system
 - Group work such as circle time
- If pupils require counseling or further supports the school will endeavor to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or the pupil involved in the bullying behaviour.
- Working with the ‘bully’ to ensure that they recognise how their actions were having a negative impact on other children’s lives. Pupils involved in serious bullying behaviour may need assistance and support on an on-going basis.

12. Referral of serious cases to the HSE (*Section 6.8.12 pg 35 of Procedures*)

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”.

Serious instances of bullying behaviour will, in accordance with the Children First and *the Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*, be referred to the HSE Children and Family Services and/or Gardaí as appropriate.

The *Child Protection Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools* also provide that where school personnel have concerns about a child but are not sure whether to report the matter to the HSE, the Designated Liaison Person must seek advice from the HSE Children and Family Social Services.

13. Follow up by the ‘Relevant Teacher’ after the bullying issue has been addressed by the school

In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed 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;
 - Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardian(s) or the school Principal or Deputy Principal
- In some cases a follow-up meeting with the relevant parties involved may be arranged separately, at first, with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable. This may have a therapeutic effect and be of benefit to all parties.

If the Relevant Teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately or appropriately addressed within 20 school days after they have determined that bullying behaviour occurred, then they must complete the recording template at Appendix 3 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary Schools.

14. Reporting to the Board of Management.

At every Board of Management meeting the Principal must inform the Board of;

- The overall number of bullying cases reported to him/her by means of receiving the recording template at Appendix 3 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary Schools since the previous Board meeting.
- Confirmation that all cases referred to have been or are being dealt with in accordance with the school's Anti-Bullying policy and the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary Schools.

The Board of Management will undertake an annual review of the school's Anti-Bullying policy and its implementation by the school every September or at the first board meeting of the new school year, Appendix 4.

The Board of Management will inform the Parent's Association that they have conducted their annual review of the policy and its implementation, Appendix 5.

15. Procedures for Parents/Guardians not satisfied with how a bullying case is addressed by the school.

- Where a parent/guardian is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents/guardians must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
- In the event that a parent/guardian has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent/guardian of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

16. Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils *(Section 6.6.1. pg 28 of Procedures)*

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.

17. 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.

18. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy *(Section 6.8.9. pg 36 of Procedures)*

- The effectiveness of the school's anti-bullying policy will be subject to continuous review in the light of frequency of incidents of bullying behaviour reported.
- the school will make provision for periodic examination of the prevention and intervention strategies in place. This will take place at Staff meetings and at Board of Management meetings.
- The Parent's Association has been involved in the formulation of this policy and will continue to provide feedback on it.
- The Anti-Bullying Incident Report Book and the template in Appendix 3 for recording and reporting bullying to the school Principal or Deputy Principal will be a valuable and readily accessible source of data in relation to bullying behaviour in the school.
- Data gathered from these reports will be regularly (at the end of every school year) collated and analysed by a member of the ISM team with a view to monitoring levels of bullying behaviour and identifying any particular issues that require attention or any significant trends in behaviour.
- A record of this analysis will be retained and be made available to the Board of Management. Appropriate responses to any issues identified will be drawn up and implemented as needed.

This policy has been made available to school personnel and provided to the Parents' Association. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

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 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.

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on _____.

Signed; _____

(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Signed; _____

(Principal)

Date of next review; _____

Principal: Mr. James Battersby.

Deputy Principal: Mrs. Eileen Maguire

