



Scoil an Chroí Ró-Naofa, Urlingford N.S.

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

This policy was devised by the Staff and Board of Management of Scoil an Chroí Ró-Naofa. Additional help was received from the School Development Planning Service and the IPPN Resources Website. It was put into writing by Dermot Dunphy, Principal and formally passed by the Staff and the Board of Management on 10th June 2008.

Definition of Bullying:

Bullying can be defined as repeated aggression whether it is verbal, psychological or physical, which is conducted by an individual or a group against others. It is behaviour that is intentionally aggravating and intimidating. It includes behaviour such as teasing, taunting, threatening, hitting, exclusion or extortion by one or more pupils against a victim.

Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, while not to be condoned or tolerated, cannot be described as bullying.

Rationale of this policy:

Bullying behaviour thrives in an atmosphere of uncertainty and secrecy in which the victim often feels a sense of hopelessness. It is perceived that the implementation of our school Code of Discipline and School Rules in an even and fair-minded way will create an atmosphere of openness and tolerance in our school. We hope that such an atmosphere will allow children to express their feelings to staff members and parents freely and without worry. We also hope that good and open communication between parents and staff will aid in reducing possible incidents of bullying to a minimum. Whenever difficulties arise, open and good communication should lead to a quick resolution of such difficulties. To aid this process the following policy outlines means to deal with such difficulties if and when they arise.



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Indications of Bullying:

- (a) Anxiety about attending school.
- (b) Deterioration in educational performance.
- (c) Pattern of physical illness.
- (d) Unexplained changes in mood or behaviour.
- (e) Visible signs of anxiety or distress.
- (f) Possessions missing.
- (g) Increased requests for money.
- (h) Unexplained bruising.
- (i) Reluctance to say what is troubling him/her.

These are all signs of a variety of problems as well as bullying.

Prevention of Bullying:

“Prevention is better than cure” – In this school we see that steps can be taken to limit the occurrences of bullying behaviour and we strive to prevent bullying occurring at all. Through the S.P.H.E. curriculum and direct lesson planning, we aim to have the children understand the wrongs of bullying and the harmful effects bullying can have on a person. It is an aim of the school that children see their school as a happy place of learning where all have the same right to attend school in a safe environment. By promoting an atmosphere of safety and happiness, we hope that children will see bullying as intolerable in their school.

The following are some of the steps taken to prevent bullying.

1. The School Code of Discipline aims to foster a positive and happy atmosphere in the school.
2. Incidents of misbehaviour are dealt with in a fair and even-handed way. All children are treated equally and each child is valued equally.
3. Each class dedicates a discrete part of its SPHE Curriculum to Anti-Bullying – each class has lessons from the RSE Programme, Walk Tall Programme and North Western Health Board Manuals as guides to these discrete lessons.
4. Classes regularly develop their own class policies for Anti-Bullying
5. Where the question of bullying happening arises, classes will often again address the issue in a discrete manner.



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Reports of Bullying:

Concerns regarding bullying may be made by Parents, Staff Members and by the children themselves. Other reports of suspected bullying should be taken under advisement.

Procedures for noting and reporting incidents:

Report by a Parent:

If parents have concerns about their child being bullied in school, they should inform the school, normally the class teacher.

Reports of the concerns should be recorded.

The teachers involved should investigate and act appropriately.

Report by a Teacher:

If a teacher has concerns about a child being bullied in school he/she should inform the principal.

A report of such concerns should be recorded

The teacher and principal should investigate and act appropriately.

Report by a child:

If a child reports to a teacher that he/she is being bullied, the teacher should record this concern.

The teacher should report this concern to the Principal.

The teacher and principal should investigate and act appropriately.

Report by another:

If another person reports that they feel a child may be subjected to bullying, the teacher would report to the principal or vice-versa. The teacher/principal will then take the opportunity to observe the pupil in different settings conscious of the indications of bullying outlined above.

After observation for a short period, the school may contact the parents and arrange to meet with a parent/guardian to discuss the situation and obtain parental views. If at this stage a concern still arises the situation should be investigated and appropriate actions taken.



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Recording a Report of Bullying:

1. Where a report of bullying has been made, the teacher/principal will initially record the complaint in his/her own notes.
2. The teacher or principal investigating the incident should record notes of interviews.
3. If observation is used as part of the investigation, relevant notes should be recorded by the person observing.
4. Where it has been agreed that an incident of bullying has occurred a formal Bullying Record Form (Appendix 1) will be started. Important issues from any recorded notes should be transcribed onto this official form. The formal Bullying Record Form should be kept with the School Incident Book.

Procedures for investigating bullying:

1. Investigation should take place in calm, unemotional way adopting a problem solving approach.
2. Incidents are best investigated outside the classroom situation whenever possible. Initial reports may take place in a classroom situation and the investigating teacher/principal may take actions to move the investigation outside the classroom.
3. Teachers should speak separately to the children involved and form an initial opinion as to what has happened.
4. The teacher should then inform the principal, in his/her role of co-ordinator, of the problem if this has not already taken place.
5. The teacher and principal may investigate further to ascertain if bullying as defined in this policy has occurred. According to School Rules: "Bullying is considered to be a serious breach of discipline and contrary to our school vision statement." At this point, the procedures for dealing with bullying will be implemented.

Teachers may reference the booklet 'Investigating and Resolving Bullying in School' from The Cool School Programme' as issued by the North Eastern Health Board for further guidelines.



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Procedures for dealing with bullying:

Where it has been determined that bullying has occurred, parents of all concerned should be informed.

The child being bullied:

1. The child being bullied should be spoken to with his/her parents and reassured that the problem is being addressed. Reassurance should also be given that the child is not at fault and should in no way feel that they have blame in the matter. The child should be further reassured that reporting bullying is always the correct course of action and that they have done the right thing in bringing this to an adult's attention.

The child who acted as a bully:

2. The child/children involved in bullying should be spoken to with his/her/their parents. Discussion should be used to ascertain the reasons for the behaviour of the child/children. Parents and teachers should try to be conscious of possible underlying reasons that bullying may have been resorted to.
3. The child/children should be spoken to regarding the effects of bullying and the reason why bullying is always wrong.
4. The child/children should be warned of his/her/their future behaviour in this regard and that regular contact will be made with parents regarding ongoing behaviour.
5. In agreement with the parents a suitable punishment will be administered. This would normally involve some form of detention. Other possible sanctions will be in line with the School Code of discipline.

Following the bullying incident:

1. The school will continue to monitor the situation within classroom and playground situations to ensure that all bullying behaviour has stopped and not re-started. This will continue for as long as the school feels is necessary.
2. Parents will be contacted after an agreed length of time. This contact will be used to confirm that the incidents of bullying have come to an end or if there is an ongoing problem.
3. Lines of communication will remain open with parties involved and other follow up contacts will be made if deemed necessary.



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4. A full report on the incident will be retained in the School Incident Book. (See Recording a Report of Bullying)

This report should be descriptive, objective and should avoid giving opinions.

The report should include details from the initial report. Details recounted by others involved. The agreement made by the parties involved. An account of the sanctions taken and details of any follow up or monitoring.

Teachers may reference the booklet 'Responding to Bullying' from The Cool School Programme' as issued by the North Eastern Health Board for further guidelines.

Reviewed and agreed by the Board of Management on June 10th 2014.



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Bullying Record Form

Teacher: _____ Class: _____

Names of those involved:

Details of incident/s:

Interventions:

Actions taken:

Further Actions:

Date: _____ Date for Review: _____

Signed: _____
Principal Teacher Parent