

# Scoil Oilibhéir Naofa Junior School

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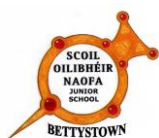


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## ANTI BULLYING POLICY

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# Anti Bullying Policy

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# Anti Bullying Policy

## Anti Bullying Policy

- Scoil Oilibhéir Naofa school community believes that each pupil has a right to an education free from fear and intimidation.
- Scoil Oilibhéir Naofa is a junior primary school. As such we focus on prevention through teaching pupils about kindness, respect and being a good friend.
- The school regards bullying as a serious infringement of individual rights and a serious threat to the self-esteem and self-confidence of targeted pupil(s). Therefore, it does not tolerate bullying of any kind.
- Every report of bullying is treated seriously and dealt with, having due regard for the well-being of the targeted pupil(s) and the perpetrator(s).
- Should a bullying incident occur the immediate priority, should a bullying incident occur, is ending the bullying, (thereby protecting the person(s) being targeted) and resolving the issues and restoring the relationships involved insofar as is practicable using a “Reform, not Blame” approach.
- All pupils are expected to contribute to the creation and maintenance of a safe environment in the school. On becoming aware of any bullying situation, in or outside the school, involving members of the school community, they should notify a trusted responsible adult. Bullying behaviour is too serious not to report.
- Pupils’ participation in school life in general is encouraged through existing school structures. Awareness of bullying, and willingness to take action to prevent or stop it, is part of this participation.

## Requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000

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 Oilibhéir 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.

## Key Principles of best Practice

- 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:



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- 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;
- Effective leadership
  - A school-wide approach
  - A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact
  - Implementation of education and prevention strategies in an age appropriate manner for a junior school (including awareness raising measures) that:
    - build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and
    - explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based 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.

## Defining 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 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.



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Negative behaviour that does not meet this definition of bullying will be dealt with in accordance with the school's code of behaviour.

Examples of bullying behaviours are available at [Appendix 1](#).

Additional information on different types of bullying is set out in Section 2 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools*.

## Relevant Teachers

The relevant teacher(s) for investigating and dealing with bullying is (are) as follows

- Principal
- Deputy Principal
- All class teachers
- Relevant Teacher is the teacher that witnesses bullying or to whom bullying is reported. The teacher on yard is the relevant teacher, if an event occurs on yard.

Any teacher may act as a relevant teacher if circumstances warrant it.

## Education and Prevention Strategies

The education and prevention strategies that will be used by the school are as follows (see Section 6.5 of the *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary School*)

- Scoil Oilibhéir Naofa adopts 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 highlighting of the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.

## Creating a culture of telling

- The staff of Scoil Oilibhéir Naofa repeatedly reinforces the message that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported. Reassurance is given that all incidents of bullying will be dealt with in a safe manner. Pupils will gain a confidence in telling, which is of vital importance.
- Bystanders can be the key to resolving bullying. 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

- Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
- Hand note up with homework.
- Ask a parent(s)/guardian(s) to tell on your behalf.
  
- Ask a friend/peer to tell on your behalf.
- Teacher administers a confidential questionnaire.



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- Teacher ensures bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.

## **Supervision and monitoring**

Effective supervision and monitoring systems facilitate early intervention.

- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, hall, playgrounds, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities.
- Non-teaching staff encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers.
- Monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.

## **Professional Development**

- 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.
- Professional development with specific focus on procedures to be followed by a relevant teacher(s).
- Focus on lessons and resources available for young children on <https://www.antibullyingcampaign.ie/>

## **Raising the awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour by:**

- The development of dedicated display boards and posters in the school promoting friendship and bullying prevention.
- Age-appropriate lessons from <https://www.antibullyingcampaign.ie/> will be taught at regular intervals.
- The anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils in 2<sup>nd</sup> class and is also available on the school's website.

## **Promoting a positive sense of self-worth and building empathy and resilience in pupils**

- Formal and informal interactions.
- Praise for positive actions, acts of kindness, helpfulness, being a good friend
- Celebration of Friendship Week.
- Development of the use of a Friendship/Buddy Bench
- Fun Friends Programme where beneficial to some children at a class level.

## **Cyber bullying**

- Promoting awareness of Scoil Oilibhéir Naofa's Acceptable Use Policy and ensuring that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored.
- Communicating the message that unlike other forms of bullying, a once-off



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posting can constitute bullying.

- Advising students on how to protect themselves from being involved in bullying and to how to report any incidents. Creating a telling atmosphere, so that pupils will report cyber bullying where they see it.
- Publicising ways of dealing with cyber bullying outside of school (no messaging apps / emails / social media enabled in school), for example:
  - Don't reply.
  - Keep the message.
  - Block the sender.
  - Tell someone you trust.

**Note:** Children do not have access to social media on school devices and use of their own devices is not permitted in the school. (See ICT Acceptable Use policy)

## Special Education Needs

- Our school's approach to tackling and preventing bullying takes particular account of the needs of pupils with SEN, and joins up with other relevant school policies and supports to ensure that all the services that provide for such pupils work together. Approaches to decreasing the likelihood of bullying for pupils with SEN include improving inclusion, focusing on developing social skills, cultivating a good school culture which has respect for all and helping one another.
- Initiatives and programmes focused on developing pupils' awareness and understanding, including its causes and effects, will deal explicitly with the issue of identity-based bullying. Where issues of identity-based bullying arise, the school will deal with them at an individual, group, class, or whole school level in consultation with the parents/guardians of the children involved. The young age of our pupils will be taken in to consideration.
- Clear protocols will be identified to encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied. The protocol should be developed in consultation with parents and the outcome of bullying allegations should be communicated to parents of children directly involved.

## Implementation of the curricula

- Teachers influence attitudes to bullying behaviour in a positive manner through a range of curricular initiatives. There are a number of curriculum components and programmes which are particularly relevant to the prevention of bullying and the promotion of respect for diversity and inclusiveness.
- SPHE curriculum makes specific provision for exploring bullying as well as the inter-related areas of belonging and integrating, communication, conflict, friendship, personal safety, and relationships.
- The Stay Safe programme is a personal safety skills programme which seeks to enhance children's self-protection skills including their ability to recognise and copewith bullying.
- RSE aims to provide opportunities for children to learn about relationships and sexuality in ways that help them think and act in a moral, caring, and responsible way.
- Other resources and programmes appropriate for a junior school include: PDST



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Anti-Bullying Support Material, Prim-Ed Cyber Bullying Packs, Fun Friends, Walk Tall, <https://www.antibullyingcampaign.ie/>

## Links to other policies:

School policies which support the Anti-Bullying policy:

- Code of Behaviour
- Child Protection Policy
- Supervision of pupils
- ICT Acceptable Use policy
- Attendance
- RSE Policy
- SPHE Policy

## Procedures for investigating and dealing with bullying

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 outlined in Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-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. Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parent(s)/guardians) 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. Incident report forms will be available as an electronic form and are completed by the relevant teacher, detailing the incident.
- All reports will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher or if appropriate the classroom teacher of the children involved. Details of the investigation are recorded in the Bullying investigation and outcome form.
- 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 allegations of bullying behaviour:

- The relevant teacher records the bullying allegation using the electronic incident report form, which is stored in hard copy format by the principal.<sup>1</sup>
- The details of the allegation, investigation and outcome are recorded on this form.

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<sup>1</sup> This will be kept in a secure electronic format, with a paper copy retained by the principal in a locked filing cabinet in the office. When the children have left the school, the form will be transferred to a secure storage room, where it will be retained until all children involved have turned 21 years old.





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- The outcome of an investigation will be communicated to parents of children directly involved.
- The investigation can be conducted using the following strategies
  - Whole class survey (2<sup>nd</sup> class)
  - Individual interviews with children directly involved or witnesses – interviews to be conducted outside of the classroom where possible.
- In the event that they have been involved in bullying behaviour they are asked to sign<sup>2</sup> a binding promise that they will treat all pupils fairly, equally and respectfully including the targeted pupil(s).
- The 'Relevant Teacher' does not apportion blame but rather treats bullying behaviour as a 'mistake' that can and must be remedied. S/he emphasises that the intention is not to punish perpetrators but to talk to them, to explain how harmful and hurtful bullying is and to seek a promise that it will stop. If that promise is forthcoming and is honoured there will be no penalty and that will be the end of the matter. Pupils who report bullying therefore are not getting others 'in trouble' so much as enabling them to get out of trouble into which they may ultimately get if the bullying continued.
- If a pupil has signed such a promise but then chooses to break that promise and continue the bullying behaviour, this can then no longer be considered a 'mistake.' In this event parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed and requested to countersign their daughter/son's promise. Breach of this additional promise by further bullying behaviour is regarded as a very grave matter and a serious sanction may be imposed by the school authorities (See sanctions below).
- Details of the investigation and outcome must be recorded by the relevant teacher on the Bullying investigation and outcome form.

### Sanctions

Where a pupil has been found to be engaged in bullying behaviour, has formally promised to stop and has broken that promise, any of the following sanctions may be imposed:

- S/he may be required to sign another promise, this time countersigned by a parent/guardian;
- 
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) may be contacted by the relevant teacher and informed of the nature and extent of the bullying behaviour with a view to agreeing a strategy whereby a promise to end the bullying behaviour would be honoured;
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) may be invited to a meeting with the relevant teacher.
- Parent(s)/guardian(s), the relevant teacher and the Principal meet in a final effort to resolve the situation.
- The pupil may be suspended from the school. (See school's Code of behaviour)

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<sup>2</sup> All promises will be kept with the hard copy of that incident report form (as in footnote 1)



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- The case may be referred to the Board of Management and the pupil may be expelled from the school.

## Follow up and recording

- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of their 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
  - The outcome is recorded as mentioned above, on the Bullying investigation and outcome form.
- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable. Any minutes of such a meeting should be filed with the original incident report.
- Where a parent(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian(s) must be referred, as appropriate, to the parental complaints procedures [878de0051fed40b39892c85b92f0de24.pdf \(www.gov.ie\)](https://www.gov.ie/publications/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/878de0051fed40b39892c85b92f0de24.pdf).
- In the event that a parent(s)/guardian(s) has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

## Established intervention strategies

- Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress. This will 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
- The school code of behaviour
- Strengthening the victim
- Mediation

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

### Bullied pupils

- Ending the bullying behaviour
- Changing the school culture to foster more respect for bullied pupils and all pupils
- Changing the school culture to foster greater empathy towards and support for bullied pupils



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- Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the awareness-raising programme and through the speedy identification of those responsible and speedy resolution of bullying situations
- After resolution, enabling bullied pupils to complete a victim-impact statement
- Helping bullied pupils raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that help develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school)
- If pupils require counselling or further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same, i.e. NEPS, School Completion Programme, HSE, Family Counselling Services

### **Bullying pupils**

- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are not blamed or punished and get a 'clean sheet'
- Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are doing the right and honourable thing and giving them praise for this
- Making adequate supports available to help those who need to learn other ways of meeting their needs besides violating the rights of others
- Helping those who need to raise their self-esteem by encouraging them to become involved in activities that develop friendships and social skills (e.g. participation in group work in class and in extra-curricular group or team activities during or after school)
- Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils' feelings of self-worth
- In dealing with negative behaviour in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child
- 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:
  - Social skills groups
  - Buddy Programmes
  - Fun Friends Programme
  - Group work such as circle time
- 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 teacher.

### **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.



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## 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.

## Ratification of policy

This policy was adopted by the Board of Management in February 2023 .  
It was reviewed in May 2024.

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website 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, published on the school website 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.

**Signed** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Miriam Marsh (Chairperson B.O.M.)**

**Signed** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Maria White (Principal)**

**Date of next review** May 2025

## Appendix 1 Examples of bullying behaviours

<p><b>General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying likely to be encountered in a junior primary school</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical aggression</li> <li>• Damage to property</li> <li>• Name calling</li> <li>• Slagging</li> <li>• The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person</li> <li>• Offensive graffiti</li> <li>• Intimidation</li> <li>• Insulting or offensive gestures</li> </ul>
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## Anti Bullying Policy

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The “look”</li><li>• Invasion of personal space</li><li>• A combination of any of the types listed.</li></ul>
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