
ANTI-BULLYING POLICY



SCOIL NA MAINISTREACH QUIN DANGAN



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 Scoil na Mainistreach Quin Dangan national 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. This policy was updated in 2019

Rationale for Policy

It is the policy of Scoil na Mainistreach Quin Dangan that its pupils have the right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment without fear of being bullied. The school also has a clear policy on the promotion of respect for, and by, all members of the school community. It was deemed important by staff that the school has a clear, written policy to promote this culture of respect. The key objective is to ensure that staff, pupils and parent(s)/guardians are fully aware that any bullying complaints will be dealt with firmly, fairly and promptly.

Link to our Mission Statement, our Code of Behaviour and our Enrolment Policy

Our Mission Statement, our Enrolment Policy and our Code of Behaviour all place a key emphasis on "respect and tolerance". Similarly our school motto: *We do our best, we show respect*, which is displayed throughout the school, on the school flag and which is regularly recited by students at assembly, underlines respect as a key value in our school.

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-
 - 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 (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.

- 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*.

TYPES OF BULLYING – MAY INCLUDE IN THE FOLLOWING:

- **Physical:** This includes pushing, shoving, tripping, punching, kicking, hitting or spitting etc. It can also take the form of severe physical assault. "mess fights" can also be used as a disguise for physical harassment or inflicting pain.
- **Damage to Property:** This may result in damage to clothing, school books and other learning items. The contents of school bags and pencil cases may be scattered on the floor. Personal property may be defaced, broken, stolen or hidden.
- **Verbal:** Verbal abuse can take the form of:
 1. Name calling. Persistent name calling directed at the same individual(s) which hurts, insults or humiliates, or the use of abusive and or obscene language.
 2. Slandorous and malicious rumours.
 3. Slagging, when it extends away from good natured banter to personal remarks aimed at appearance, family, clothing, personal hygiene or academic ability.
 4. Threats or intimidation through use of aggressive body language or the voice being used as a weapon.

- **Psychological:** This includes:
 1. Isolation – exclusion from discussions/ activities.
 2. Extortion – obtaining (e.g. money, lunch, sweets etc.) from a person by force or threat.
 3. Repeated unreasonable assignment to duties that are obviously unfavourable.
 4. Repeated unreasonable deadlines or tasks.
- **Cyber:** In recent years children have become adept in the use of electronic gadgets for communication purposes. This issue is also dealt with in the school Acceptable Use Policy (AUP).

Indications of Bullying

The following signs/symptoms may suggest that a pupil is being bullied:

- Anxiety about travelling to and from school - requesting parents to drive or collect him/her, changing route of travel, avoiding regular times for travelling to and from school.
- Unwillingness to go to school, refusal to attend, “mitching”, “ditching”.
- Deterioration in educational performance, loss of concentration and loss of enthusiasm and interest in school.
- Pattern of physical illnesses (e.g. headaches, stomach aches).
- Unexplained changes either in mood or behaviour; it may be particularly noticeable before returning to school after weekends or more especially after longer school holidays.
- Visible signs of anxiety or distress – stammering, withdrawing, nightmares, and difficulty in sleeping, crying, not eating, vomiting, bedwetting.
- Spontaneous out-of-character comments about either pupils or teachers.
- Possessions missing or damaged.
- Increased requests for money or stealing money.
- Unexplained bruising or cuts or damaged clothing.
- Reluctance and/or refusal to say what is troubling him/her.

Strategies for Prevention of Bullying

1. The Social Persona and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum, including the Walk Tall and Stay Safe programmes, internet safety week/Webwise is used throughout the school to support the anti-bullying policy.
2. Scoil na Mainistreach adopts the Health Promoting Schools principles by promoting mental health and wellbeing.
3. Positive self-esteem is fostered among the pupils by celebrating individual differences, by acknowledging good behaviour and by providing opportunities for success.
4. Regular meditation is used throughout the school to promote resilience and coping skills.
5. Pupils are helped to develop empathy by discussing feelings and by trying to put themselves in the place of others.
6. Teachers respond sensitively to pupils who disclose incidents of bullying.
7. The staff is particularly vigilant in monitoring pupils who are considered at risk of bullying/being bullied.
8. All disclosed incidents of bullying will be investigated.
9. Members of the Board of Management (BOM) are familiar with the school’s policy on bullying and actively promote it on a repeated basis among staff, parents and pupils.
10. Parents/Guardians contribute to and support the school, by being vigilant for signs and symptoms that their child is being bullied or is bullying others, by communicating concerns to the school.

11. Supervision. Insofar as is reasonable practicable school activities will be supervised and monitored at all times, with particular emphasis on those occasions when situations of bullying are more likely to occur, such as assembly time, play time and dismissal time.

Maintaining Awareness of Bullying as a Form of Unacceptable Behaviour

Scoil na Mainistreach Quin Dangan will emphasise and reinforce the view that bullying behaviour is unacceptable by:

- Using school assemblies to remind pupils of the school's anti-bullying policy.
- Using both formal and informal curriculum to emphasise that bullying is unacceptable e.g. visual arts activities, posters, drama, role play, SPHE and co-operative games.
- Underlining that respect is a key value in the school through displaying the school motto in classrooms, on the school flag and throughout the school building.

Disclosure

Children will be encouraged to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour. They will be helped to differentiate between incidents of a minor nature and those that constitute bullying. They will also be taught the difference between 'telling tales' and asking for help.

Bullying by Adults

In the case of **intra-staff bullying**, Scoil na Mainistreach Quin Dangan will adopt the procedures outlined in Section C (c2) of the INTO booklet: 'Working Together: Procedures and Policies for Positive Staff Relations'. A copy of this document is available for free download on the INTO website.

In the case of **Teacher – Child bullying**, a complaint should, in the first instance, be raised with the teacher in question by the parent/guardian of the child and then, if necessary, referred to the Principal. Where it has not been possible to agree a framework for resolution, the matter should be referred, in writing, by both parties to the Board of Management for investigation. This type of bullying will be addressed under the school's Child Protection Policy.

In the case of **Parent – Teacher bullying**, the Principal should be informed, in the first instance, and if deemed necessary the Board of Management will be subsequently be informed, in writing.

In the case of **Parent/Visitor to the school – Child bullying**, the complaint should be referred in the first instance to the child's class teacher and subsequently to the Principal, if unresolved.

In the case of **Principal – Parent/ Child bullying**, the matter should be raised with the Principal if possible, or referred to the Chairperson of the Board of Management.

As stated in the Child Safeguarding Statement will be addressed under the Code of Behaviour and the Anti-Bullying Policies. All instances of Adult to Child bullying will be addressed under the Child Safeguarding Statement.

3. **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*):**

Current class teachers from junior infants to 6th class. Resource and Learning Support Teachers. School Principal.

4. **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*):**

This will be taught in class lessons in areas of SPHE and English. Children will be directed towards good behaviour on yard, in school and online. Visitors with expertise on bullying and Internet safety will be invited to the school where the timetable and funds allow.

5. **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*):**

Procedures for Dealing with Instances of Bullying:

- Given the complexity of bullying behaviour it is generally acknowledged that no one intervention works in all situations. International and national research also continues to evolve in this area and the effectiveness of particular approaches continues to be reviewed.
- All incidents of bullying will be recorded in teacher's notes and will be retained in the school.
- Non-teaching staff are encouraged to report any incidences of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, to the teaching staff.
- Pupils will be informed that when they report incidents of bullying they are acting responsibly.
- A calm unemotional problem solving approach will be used to deal with bullying.
- Incidents of bullying will initially be dealt with by the class teacher. Incidents that are of a serious nature or those that involve pupils from a number of classes will be referred to the Principal.
- On being informed of an alleged incident of bullying, the teacher dealing with the report will first interview the victim(s) and discuss the feelings which the victim(s) experienced because of the bullying behaviour.
- An interview will then take place with the alleged perpetrator(s). All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. If the bullying involves a group of pupils' members of that group will first be met individually and then as a whole. Having discussed the negative impact which bullying has on both perpetrator(s) and victim(s) responsibility will be placed on all individuals within the group to resolve the difficulty and to take appropriate steps to ensure that it does not happen again.
- If on the conclusion of the preliminary investigation the teacher is convinced that bullying has occurred the Principal will be informed and parent(s)/guardian(s) of all concerned will be contacted.
- It should be made clear to the child who has engaged in bullying behaviour that he/she are in breach of the school's anti bullying policy and efforts should be made to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied.

- Parents and pupils are required to co-operate with any investigation and assist the school in resolving any issues and restoring as far as practical the relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible.
- It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school.
- Repeated incidents of bullying behaviour will result in the imposition of sanctions. Such sanctions will be proportionate to the seriousness of the bullying Behaviour.
- Scoil na Mainistreach Quin Dangan advocates the use of restorative practices in resolving conflicts and in the case of bullying among children. Employing restorative practices as a collaborative and problem solving approach enables all sides to resolve issues, deal with conflict in a healthy manner to restore and rebuild relationships.

Appropriate Sanctions

- The use of sanctions is an important element in the school Code of Behaviour. They are used in a corrective way and are intended to help the child to change and improve his or her behavioural patterns.
- The nature of the misbehaviour and the age of the child will determine the strategy to be employed.

Disciplinary Actions and Sanctions to deal with Bullying:

- Bullying is a serious misdemeanour and the sanctions applied may include those listed below for serious misdemeanours:
- Apology to the victim.
- A record is kept. Pupil(s) write an account of the incident(s) that lead to the bullying behaviour and what they have learned from this episode in their lives – parents must sign this.
- Pupils may be removed from an activity if endangering self or others.
- Principal is notified, particularly if bullying is serious or recurring. Parents will be notified and asked to come to the school to discuss the incident.
- If the situation is very serious the Board of Management will be notified and further steps will be taken in line with our code of behaviour, i.e. suspension/expulsion.

6. 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*) :

Children (both those bullied and those carried out the bullying) will be monitored using the class / yard observation form and supported in the school by all staff in conjunction with parents. Children may need counselling and/or opportunities to participate in activities to raise their self-esteem, develop their friendship and social skills and thereby build resilience. SPHE lessons will be taught in classes to create awareness and coping strategies. Children will also have opportunities to express their feelings/ events through termly surveys from 2nd to 6th which will be assessed by the class teachers.

Pupils who observe incidents of bullying behaviour should be encouraged to discuss them with teachers.

7. 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. Appendix 6 will guide teachers and school staff in monitoring incidents.

8. 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.

9. This amended policy was adopted by the Board of Management on 29/03/19.

10. 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. A copy will also be forward to St Senan's Diocesan office.

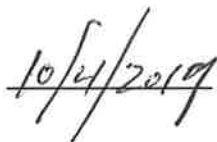
11. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made available to school personnel, published on the school website and provided to the Parents' Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available, if requested, to the patron and the Department.

Signed:



(Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date:



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

Appendix 3 Template for recording bullying behaviour

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name _____ Class _____

2. Name(s) and class(es) of pupil(s) engaged in bullying behaviour

3. Source of bullying concern/report (tick relevant box(es))*

Pupil concerned	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other Pupil	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent	<input type="checkbox"/>
Teacher	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Location of incidents (tick relevant box(es))*

Playground	<input type="checkbox"/>
Classroom	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corridor	<input type="checkbox"/>
Toilets	<input type="checkbox"/>
School Bus	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. Name of person(s) who reported the bullying concern

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6. Type of Bullying Behaviour (tick relevant box(es)) *

Physical Aggression	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cyber-bullying	<input type="checkbox"/>
Damage to Property	<input type="checkbox"/>	Intimidation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Isolation/Exclusion	<input type="checkbox"/>	Malicious Gossip	<input type="checkbox"/>
Name Calling	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other (specify)	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. Where behaviour is regarded as identity-based bullying, indicate the relevant category:

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact

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9. Details of actions taken

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Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher) Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

*** Note:** The categories listed in the tables 3, 4 & 6 are suggested and schools may add to or amend these to suit their own circumstances.

Appendix 4

Checklist for annual review of the anti-bullying policy and its implementation

The Board of Management (the Board) must undertake an annual review of the school's anti-bullying policy and its implementation. The following checklist must be used for this purpose. The checklist is an aid to conducting this review and is not intended as an exhaustive list. In order to complete the checklist, an examination and review involving both quantitative and qualitative analysis, as appropriate across the various elements of the implementation of the school's anti-bullying policy will be required.

	Yes /No
Has the Board formally adopted an anti-bullying policy that fully complies with the requirements of the <i>Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools</i> ?	
Has the Board published the policy on the school website and provided a copy to the parents' association?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been made available to school staff (including new staff)?	
Is the Board satisfied that school staff are sufficiently familiar with the policy and procedures to enable them to effectively and consistently apply the policy and procedures in their day to day work?	
Has the Board ensured that the policy has been adequately communicated to all pupils?	
Has the policy documented the prevention and education strategies that the school applies?	
Have all of the prevention and education strategies been implemented?	
Has the effectiveness of the prevention and education strategies that have been implemented been examined?	
Is the Board satisfied that all teachers are recording and dealing with incidents in accordance with the policy?	
Has the Board received and minuted the periodic summary reports of the Principal?	
Has the Board discussed how well the school is handling all reports of bullying including those addressed at an early stage and not therefore included in the Principal's periodic report to the Board?	
Has the Board received any complaints from parents regarding the school's handling of bullying incidents?	
Have any parents withdrawn their child from the school citing dissatisfaction with the school's handling of a bullying situation?	
Have any Ombudsman for Children investigations into the school's handling of a bullying case been initiated or completed?	
Has the data available from cases reported to the Principal (by the bullying recording template) been analysed to identify any issues, trends or patterns in bullying behaviour?	
Has the Board identified any aspects of the school's policy and/or its implementation that require further improvement?	
Has the Board put in place an action plan to address any areas for improvement?	

Signed _____
Chairperson, Board of Management

Date _____

Signed _____
Principal

Date _____

Appendix 5

Questions based on the DES definition of bullying

Is it Bullying?

Checklist

	Consider	Yes	No
1	Is the behaviour repeated? Only repeated incidents can be regarded as bullying. Once off incidents fall under the Code of Behaviour. However, see 2 below.		
2	Have there been any offensive or hurtful public messages or images placed on a social networking site or other public forum? Can the bullying image, statement or message be viewed or repeated by other people? NB: Once such incident qualifies as cyber bullying.		
3	Is the behaviour planned?		
4	Is there unwanted negative behaviour inflicted on the victim?		
5	Is the unwanted negative behaviour of a physical, verbal or Psychological character?		
6	Is the behaviour inflicted by one person, or is there a group involved?		
7	Is the victim deliberately targeted?		
8	Do the behaviours involve deliberate exclusion, isolation, malicious gossip or other forms of relational aggression?		
9	Are the behaviours targeting an aspect of the victim's identity? For example physical, verbal or psychological aggression which is directed at their sexual orientation, their race, religion, ethnicity or traveller background.		
10	Are the behaviours targeting the victim because they have Special Educational Needs?		

Appendix 6

Class / Yard Observation Sheet

Teacher: _____

Class: _____

Date: ___ / ___ / ___

Time	Name of pupil / s	Behaviour	Directed towards

Appendix 7

Friendship / Anti-Bullying Questionnaire

Class: _____ Name: _____ Date: _____

Would you like to talk to someone about bullying? Yes No

Do you know anyone who is having a hard time? Yes No