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Anti Bullying Policy

Guidelines for a Whole School Approach to Bullying

Table of Reviews

Revision	Date	Ratified by Board
1	Jan. 2018	Yes
2	Feb. 2022	Yes
3	Mar. 2024	Yes

Aims:	4
Action to Implement Ethos:.....	4
Guidelines for Teachers:.....	4
What is bullying?	4
Verbal Bullying:.....	5
Physical Bullying:	5
Gesture Bullying.....	5
Exclusion Bullying	5
Extortion Bullying	5
Characteristics of the Bully:.....	5
Recognising the Victims:.....	5
Guidelines for Teachers:.....	5
Immediate Responses to Bullying	6
Involving others	6
Procedure	7
Guidelines for Parents/Guardians.	7
Awareness:	7
Types of Bullying:.....	7
Physical:	7
Verbal.....	7
Psychological.....	7
Cyber Bullying:	8
What to do when bullying occurs:.....	8
The Child who Bullies.....	8
Signs and Symptoms.....	8
Verbal Bullying includes.....	9
Non-Verbal Bullying <i>includes</i>	9
Physical Bullying includes	9
Cyber-bullying includes.....	9
Record Keeping:.....	10
STAFF	10
Objectives:	10
Legal Background:.....	10
Scope of Policy:.....	10
Definition of Bullying:	10
Verbal.....	11
Non-Verbal.....	11

Physical	11
What bullying or harassment is not	11
Responsibility:.....	12
Procedures for dealing with allegations of bullying:	12
Informal	12
Formal.....	12
Other Issues:	13

Aims:

- ❖ To create a whole school ethos which encourages children to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying.
- ❖ To raise awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour with staff, management, teachers, pupils, parents/guardians.
- ❖ To ensure comprehensive supervision and monitoring, through which all areas of school activity are kept under observation.
- ❖ To develop procedures for noting and reporting incidents of bullying behaviour.
- ❖ To develop procedures for investigating and dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour.
- ❖ To develop a programme of support for those affected by bullying behaviour and for those involved in bullying behaviour.
- ❖ To counter bullying and anti-social behaviour in all its forms.
- ❖ To evaluate the effectiveness of this policy on an annual basis at our May Staff Meeting.

Action to Implement Ethos:

- ❖ Staysafe Programme to be covered in each class on an annual basis.
- ❖ Bullying to be specifically addressed as a topic of importance, in each class, by every teacher, on a term basis.
- ❖ Principal to address each class twice per term, on the importance of how we treat each other and with specific emphasis on how seriously we treat any incident of bullying.
- ❖ Ms. Meehan to visit each class and to cover with all pupils, on an age appropriate basis, the impact of bullying on our pupils, our staff, our parents and our community. (See Special Duties file).
- ❖ Miss Meehan to work on a more continuous basis with classes where a clear problem exists.
- ❖ Miss Meehan to work on a one on one basis with individuals, both perpetrators and victims, where assistance is required.
- ❖ Create a greater awareness and understanding of bullying behaviour (i.e. background information).

Guidelines for Teachers

What is bullying?

Bullying is repeated aggression, verbal psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or a group against another or others. Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, while they indicate a problem that needs to be sorted out, do not constitute bullying. Bullying is deliberately over a period of time making the life of another child miserable. This definition is the corner stone of our approach to anti-bullying in the school. We educate the school community about how serious bullying is and to understand the seriousness of the language used. This message is conveyed to teachers, student and parents.

Verbal Bullying

Verbal bullying can leave children feeling angry, frightened and powerless. Their power of concentration can suffer, thus adversely affecting their capacity for learning:

Physical Bullying

Behaviour which is often described as 'horseplay', 'pretend' or 'just a game' can lead to vicious physical assaults. This is more prevalent among boys due to their natural tendency to be aggressive, but both boys and girls indulge in this sort of bullying.

Gesture Bullying

Normally a precursor to bullying which can convey intimidating and frightening messages.

Exclusion Bullying

Exclusion bullying is particularly harmful because it isolates the child from his/her peer group. This is prevalent in girls.

Extortion Bullying

Demands for money, valuable possessions or equipment, vouchers or food from home, may be made. Often such demands are accompanied by threats.

Characteristics of the Bully

- ❖ Bullies tend to have assertive, aggressive attitudes over which they exercise little control.
- ❖ Bullies lack empathy. They cannot imagine what the victim feels. They do not appreciate the ripple effect of their actions i.e. the consequences of their actions impact on the class, parents, community etc.
- ❖ Bullies tend to lack a feeling of guilt. They rationalise that the victim somehow deserves the bullying treatment.

Recognising the Victims

Bullies pick on vulnerable children. They may be pupils who are –

- ❖ New to the school.
- ❖ Different in appearance from other children.
- ❖ Children who suffer from low esteem (low esteem can be a cause or effect of bullying).
- ❖ Prone to demonstrating “entertaining” reactions when bullied e.g. tantrums, tears, loss of control etc.
- ❖ More anxious/nervous than other children in their general demeanour.

All these possibilities are simply possibilities, not predictions of victimisation. The victim may be the child who is in the wrong place at the wrong time.

Guidelines for Teachers:

We endeavour to ensure

- ❖ That all pupils know that the school cares when they are bullied.

- ❖ That all the pupils realise that they have a duty to themselves and to the school to seek help from all and every member of staff.
- ❖ That in speaking out they are helping to improve the quality of life for all in the school.
- ❖ That victims of bullying will be supported and encouraged to be more assertive and more skilled socially.
- ❖ That the bully will be encouraged to change his ways, to control his aggression and to be more empathetic.
- ❖ That all pupils know what counts as bullying.

Immediate Responses to Bullying

- ❖ Remain calm. You are in charge. Reacting emotionally may add to the bully's fun and reinforce his behaviour.
- ❖ Take the incident or report seriously.
- ❖ Take action as quickly as possible.
- ❖ Think hard about whether your action needs to be private or public.
- ❖ Reassure the victim. Do not make him feel inadequate or foolish.
- ❖ Offer concrete help, advice and support to the victim.
- ❖ Make it plain to the bully that you disapprove.
- ❖ Encourage the bully to see the victim's point of view.
- ❖ Punish the bully if you have to, but be very careful about how you do this.
- ❖ Reacting aggressively or punitively can give the wrong message i.e. it's alright to bully if you have the power.
- ❖ Explain clearly the punishment and why it is being given.

Involving others

- ❖ Involve the Principal and other appropriate persons where necessary.
- ❖ Inform colleagues if the incident arose out of a situation where everyone should be vigilant e.g. unsupervised toilets.
- ❖ Contact both sets of parents, informing them clearly and concisely about what has happened. Reassure both sets of parents that the incident will not linger on or be held against anyone.
- ❖ Note the incident and as a precaution pass on information to the following teacher, if you feel this is required.
- ❖ If another class teacher or SNA spots bullying behaviour they will bring it immediately to the attention of the relevant class teacher.
- ❖ From the perpetrator we would expect a sincere apology with victim and teacher present.

- ❖ The perpetrator might be asked to provide a written account of the incident.
- ❖ The perpetrator might be asked to write out the school rules.
- ❖ Privileges may be curtailed-
 1. Access to the yard at playtime.
 2. Suspension from P.E. Class.
 3. Temporary withdrawal from class to that of another.
 4. Sessions with dedicated teacher to discuss and resolve difficulties.
 5. Detention on Friday following offence, of duration not lasting more than one hour,
 6. Suspension if deemed necessary.
 7. Expulsion if deemed necessary.

Reassurance must be provided for the victim. Confirmation that the school is treating the situation seriously must be provided for the victim. If necessary the victim will also get to work with the school Anti-Bullying Person. The role of the Principal is key in the delivery of this service.

Procedure

The Principal is made aware immediately if a teacher feels that bullying behaviour may be occurring in a teacher's class. The Principal will work with the teacher to ensure a proper response. We define bullying as:

⇒ Deliberately, over a period of time, making the life of another student miserable.

Guidelines for Parents/Guardians.

Awareness:

Bullying is an ongoing and systematic pattern of behaviour, not an isolated incident.

Develop good communication to create an atmosphere of trust where children will speak openly.

Develop listening skills.

Self-esteem: Build up a child's self esteem.

Assertiveness:- Encourage your child to be assertive (not aggressive).

Types of Bullying:

Physical:

Hitting, kicking, pulling hair, pushing, tripping. Writing on copies. Mess fighting. Spitting etc.

Verbal

Name calling, slagging, hurtful remarks about physical appearance. Family etc.

Psychological

Isolation – excluding child from games during playtimes, P.E., threatening gestures, demands for money, threats to hurt physically.

Cyber Bullying:

The school recognises the dangers of cyber bullying and have taken account of same when formulating this policy.

What to do when bullying occurs:

1. Encourage the child to talk (tell) about bullying.
2. Listen in a supportive way.
3. Re-assure the child that the problem lies with the bully.
4. Build up child's self esteem.
5. Keep a written record.
6. Approach the school in low key way (children fear that an approach to the school, teacher or Principal will make matters worse).
7. Develop techniques to help them cope, e.g. assertiveness – encourage child to use voice and strong body language.
8. Do not encourage the child to retaliate physically.
9. Encourage the child to play with other children, have children to visit (the child may be afraid to go out).
10. Never agree with the child to keep the bullying a secret.

The Child who Bullies

1. Try to find out why the child is bullying. Listen. The child may have become a temporary bully after a traumatic event.
2. Ensure the child apologises to the child he/she has bullied.
3. Build up the child's self esteem.
4. Keep in contact with the school.

Signs and Symptoms

1. A child who has been unhappy at school, losing interest and enthusiasm.
2. Deterioration in school performance.
3. Requests for parent to drive/collect/accompany child to/from school.
4. Nightmares.
5. Refusal to attend school.
6. Damage to personal property, clothes, books etc, or loss of same.
7. Child returning from school in a very bad humour, reluctant/refusal to say why.
8. Frequent minor illnesses – headaches, tummy aches.
9. Mood swings particularly at the end of holidays or weekends.

10. Increase for request for money/steals money.
11. Unexplained cuts and bruises.
12. Child may become withdrawn.
13. Child may become aggressive.
14. Child may develop stammer.

Verbal Bullying includes

- Verbal abuse, insults and name-calling
- Shouting and aggressive behaviour
- Using a person as a constant butt of jokes
- Derogatory or offensive nicknames
- Sneering or public humiliation
- Slandering or maligning a colleague by the manipulation of a person's reputation by gossip, rumour and ridicule
- Persistent unwarranted criticism

Non-Verbal Bullying includes

- Social exclusion, isolation or non-cooperation at work
- Showing hostility through sustained unfriendly contact or exclusion
- Unfair delegation of duties
- Taking credit for another's work
- Excessive supervision and over-checking of a person's work
- Offensive gestures
- Staring or aggressive facial expressions

Physical Bullying includes

- Unwelcome horseplay
- Unwanted physical contact
- Assault

Cyber-bullying includes

- Any of the above verbal categories by mobile phone, e-mail, internet or any other form of technology

There are, however, more insidious and less obvious behaviours that can be subtle and are often difficult to articulate as a complaint because it may involve a series of small, seemingly innocuous incidents that gradually undermine the victim's dignity and self-respect..

Record Keeping:

All matters relating to bullying are recorded by class teachers. Where necessary the matter is then passed to the Principal. If necessary and satisfactory resolution has not been reached the matter is referred to the Board. The Board receive a report on bullying in the Principal's Report at Board of Management Meetings. Each matter is dealt with in a sensitive and confidential manner.

STAFF

Scoil Lorcán Naofa is committed to the principle that all employees have the right to work in an environment free from incidents of harassment and/or bullying.

Objectives:

The objectives of this policy are –

- To endeavour to define workplace bullying.
- To promote awareness of the issue among staff.
- To provide an effective procedure for dealing with allegations of bullying.

Legal Background:

Bullying and harassment are unlawful under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1989 and the Employment Act 1998. Under the Employment Equality Act, Section 32 defines the grounds under which claims of harassment can be taken. These grounds are Sex, Marital Status, Family Status, Sexual Orientation, Religion, Disability, Age, Race and Membership of the Travelling Community.

Scope of Policy:

The scope of this policy is open to all employees, temporary and permanent, irrespective of their length of service.

Definition of Bullying:

Bullying can be defined as repeated inappropriate behaviour, direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical, psychological or otherwise.

Workplace bullying is a form of harassment. It is unwanted, unwelcome, persistent behaviour and may have many motivations but is best understood as a direct systematic attempt either by means of physical or psychological behaviour to undermine the victim's sense of value of his/her employment and/or character.

It can be conducted by one or more persons against another or others at their place of work and/or in the course of their employment. An isolated incident of the behaviour described in this definition may be an affront to dignity but as a once-off incident is not considered to be bullying.

Workplace bullying undermines organisational performance by resulting in poor morale, higher absenteeism, reduced productivity and higher turnover of staff. Harassment undermines the confidence and dignity of the individual affected by it.

While the following examples of bullying and harassment are not exhaustive or prescriptive, such behaviour can include –

Verbal

- Verbal abuse, insults and name-calling.
- Shouting and aggressive behaviour.
- Using a person as a constant butt of jokes.
- Derogatory or offensive nicknames.
- Sneering or public humiliation.
- Slandering or maligning a colleague by the manipulation of a person's reputation by gossip, rumour and ridicule.
- Persistent unwarranted criticism.

Non-Verbal

- Social exclusion, isolation or non-cooperation at work.
- Showing hostility through sustained unfriendly contact or exclusion.
- Unfair delegation of duties.
- Taking credit for another's work.
- Excessive supervision and over-checking of a person's work.
- Offensive gestures.
- Staring or aggressive facial expressions.

Physical

- Unwelcome horseplay.
- Unwanted physical contact.
- Assault.

There are, however, more insidious and less obvious behaviours that can be subtle and are often difficult to articulate as a complaint because it may involve a series of small, seemingly innocuous incidents that gradually undermine the victim's dignity and self-respect.

What bullying or harassment is not

The following behaviours do **not** constitute bullying

- Constructive and fair criticism of conduct or work performance. Poor work performance will be dealt with through the operation of fair procedure and not through an aggressive management style.
- Legitimate management responses to pressurised situations which require immediate action.

Responsibility:

All members of staff have the right to work in an environment free from any form of harassment, bullying or intimidating behaviour. Harassment and bullying can occur in any kind of workplace and individual responsibility extends to an awareness of the impact of personal behaviour that can cause offence to another member of staff and make them feel uncomfortable or threatened.

Harassment and bullying are behaviours that are destructive to a positive working atmosphere and will not be tolerated.

Management will respond to complaints of harassment or bullying and will deal with all complaints in an expeditious and supportive manner. This policy aims to inform all members of staff as to their rights and responsibilities under this policy. If someone experiences unwanted offensive treatment and then makes a complaint through the complaints procedure, he/she will be protected from any victimisation resulting from the complaint. It is also the responsibility of all staff to make themselves familiar with this policy and to treat their colleagues with respect and dignity.

Procedures for dealing with allegations of bullying:

The following procedure will be used to deal specifically with allegations of bullying-

Informal

- Any staff member who feels that he/she is being targeted or subjected to offensive harassment or bullying behaviour should first try to make it clear to the alleged bully that the behaviour is unwanted.
- A victim of harassment or bullying should keep a written record of such a request and document the alleged perpetrator's response.
- If the victim feels unable to confront the person or feels that the incident/s is/are of a serious nature, he/she should approach the Principal.
- When an informal attempt to resolve the matter fails, the complainant is encouraged to raise the complaint through the formal complaint procedure.

Formal

- When a victim has been unsuccessful at resolving a complaint informally with the alleged perpetrator and/or Principal, a formal complaint should be made in writing to the Chairman of the Board of Management.
- Once a formal complaint has been received an investigation will be undertaken by a specially convened investigating committee, which will include separate interviews with both the complainant and the alleged perpetrator, and anyone identified as a witness to the behaviour.
- All parties will be given the opportunity to state his/her case and are entitled to be represented at any interview in accordance with the principles of natural justice. Every effort will be made to safeguard confidentiality during the investigation.
- The investigating committee will submit its finding to the Board of Management, who may decide to refer it to the Department of Education & Skills.
- On the basis of the report, the Department of Education & Skills may decide that the complaint is well-founded and that the alleged bully has a case to answer. The matter may then be progressed through the

appropriate disciplinary process, which can include action from a verbal warning up to and including dismissal.

- The complainant and the alleged bully will be informed in writing of the outcome of the investigation.

Other Issues:

The impact of bullying and the stressful nature of an investigation procedure may leave either party or both feeling insecure, resentful or bitter. It is hoped that all members of staff would accept the findings of the investigation and help both the victim/s and alleged perpetrators to move forward in a positive manner for the benefit of the entire school community.

A complainant's rights are protected under this policy and he/she will not be further victimised for making a complaint in good faith. If, however, it is found that the complaint was brought maliciously, it will be treated as professional misconduct and may be liable to disciplinary action.