



St. Joseph's NS/SN Seosamh Naofa

Anti-Bullying Policy

This Anti-Bullying policy should be read in conjunction with the Code of Behaviour.

Preamble

This document is primarily used for child-to-child peer interactions. Bullying between child/adult will be addressed within child protection protocols and procedures. Adult –to-adult interactions will be dealt within existing employment legislation and procedures and the Complaints and Grievances policy.

The St. Joseph's NS/SN Seosamh Naofa school community believes that each pupil has a right to an education free from fear and intimidation. Children are taught about their responsibilities and rights. People have rights. As individuals we have a responsibility to ensure other people's rights are valued and respected by us.

Our 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 our school 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).

The immediate priorities, should a bullying incident occur, are:

1. ending the bullying, (*thereby protecting the person(s) being targeted*)
2. resolving the issues and restoring the relationships involved insofar as is practicable using a 'Learn and Reform' approach.

All pupils are expected to contribute to the creation and maintenance 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.

Anti-Bullying Policy

1. In accordance with the requirements of the *Education (Welfare) Act 2000* and the code of behaviour guidelines issued by the National Education Welfare Board (NEWB), the Board of Management of Bree NS/SN Seosamh Naofa School, Bree, 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.

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;



- 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 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 (depending on the severity), 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. Children will be taught the potential of harmful images or statements on a social network.

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

This definition includes a wide range of behaviour, whether verbal or written, whether physical or social, whether targeting person or property, whether carried out directly or indirectly or through any electronic or other medium, which could harm a pupil or undermine her/his self-esteem or self-confidence.



The school reserves the right to apply its anti-bullying policy in respect of bullying that occurs at a location, activity, function or program that is not school related if in the opinion of the Principal, Deputy Principal and/or the Board of Management the alleged bullying has created a hostile environment at school for the victim, has infringed on the rights of the victim at school and/or has materially or substantially disrupted the education process or the orderly operation of the school.

Advised by Mason Hayes & Curran, CPSMA Training, Managing Cyber Bullying Issues, 12.11.14.

Appendix 1 gives a list of specific examples of bullying behaviour. This list is not exhaustive.

Appendix 2 has advice for parents and for pupils.

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

4. As this is a primary school the teacher investigating and dealing with child to child bullying in Bree NS/SN Seosamh Naofa will *normally be the class teacher.*' (Procedures 6.8.3) although the principal may sometimes investigate if judged appropriate.

The class teacher, after investigation, will decide if a behaviour constitutes bullying under the definition of bullying above. If the teachers deems that the issue is not bullying then he or she will follow the guidelines in the Code of Behaviour to deal with the misbehaviour.

The Principal and Deputy Principal will be available for consultation when required.

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying) used by the school are as follows:

- The anti-bullying module of the SPHE programme Stay Safe, and the Walk Tall programme.
- Webwise from the Irish Internet Safety Awareness Centre, accessed at www.webwise.ie
- MySelfie and the Wider World (5th and 6th class), HTML Heroes (1st – 4th class)
- The SPHE curriculum gives opportunities for role playing and conflict resolution
- Safer Internet Day each year.



- Fr. Byrne regularly visits classes to talk about the school ethos and Christian values.
 - Board of management training.
 - Effective policies and procedures.
 - Adults modelling good behaviour, kindness, thoughtfulness, inclusion and celebrating diversity.
 - Awareness-raising exercises (assembly, Garda visits, pupil of the week, golden time, classroom rules, positive reinforcement, student council, etc.) during the school year pro-actively explaining the nature and variety, causes, consequences and unacceptability of bullying.
 - Pupils are helped to examine the issue of bullying in a calm rational, age appropriate manner, outside of the tense context of particular bullying incidents. In the process they are made more aware of the nature of bullying and the various forms that it can take.
 - Pupils are made aware that the consequences of bullying behaviour are always bad for those who are targeted, even if this is not always obvious at the time.
 - Through presentations (PDST seminars, Parents' Association talks, etc.) or other exercises, the school staff and parents/guardians are made aware of the nature of bullying and the signs that might indicate that a pupil is being bullied. They are encouraged to be vigilant in watching out for signs of bullying and to report any suspicion of bullying they may have to the 'Relevant Teacher' (in the case of staff members) or any staff member (in the case of parents/guardians).
- 6.** 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:

1. If an unwanted behaviour is reported, a teacher will speak to both parties and any witnesses to establish the facts insofar as possible. If the school rules are found to have been broken, then the incident will then be dealt with in accordance with the school's code of behaviour. The pupil(s) will be reminded of the school rules and educated on how to behave correctly.
2. The Relevant Teacher will interview the various parties and witnesses to establish the facts insofar as possible. Pupils may be asked to write an account of their behaviour (Pupil's Account of Incident - see Appendix D).
3. If an unwanted behaviour is reported, and it is reported as meeting the criteria of bullying (unwanted negative behaviour, verbal, psychological or physical conducted by an individual or group against another person (or persons) and which is repeated over time.), then the behaviour will be investigated by the



Relevant Teacher. The principal may support the Relevant Teacher if he deems it appropriate.

4. If the investigation establishes that the incident meets the criteria for bullying (deliberate, repeated aggression), and the pupils involved in the bullying behaviour accept that they have broken the school rules and would like to make amends for their behaviour, then the Relevant Teacher will treat the incident as a mistake.*
5. The Relevant Teacher will explain how harmful and hurtful bullying is, educate about correct behaviour, and seek an undertaking that it will stop. If that undertaking is forthcoming and is honoured there will be no penalty and that will be the end of the matter. Parents of the child/ren engaged in the bullying behaviour will be informed by the Relevant Teacher that their children made a mistake and that they have given an undertaking that it will stop. The parents will be informed of the matter and the actions being taken (explained by reference to the school policy). The school should give parents an opportunity of discussing ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions being taken by the school and the supports for their pupils. The parents of the child being bullied will also be informed by the Relevant Teacher of the school's actions.
6. The school will support both the bullied child and the bully.
7. The Relevant Teacher will fill out the Investigation Report and submit it to the principal. The principal will then fill out template for recording bullying behaviour and file it in the anti-bullying folder.
8. If a pupil who has given an undertaking but then chooses to break that undertaking and continue the bullying behaviour, this can then no longer be considered a 'mistake.' In this event parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed. Further bullying behaviour is regarded as a very grave matter and a serious sanction may be imposed by the school authorities (see sanctions below). The parents of the bullied child will also be informed. A meeting will be arranged for the relevant teacher and principal/deputy principal to speak to the parents of the bullied child and the school's programme for supporting pupils who have been bullied will also be discussed. A plan of action will be decided.

* If the investigation establishes that the incident met the criteria for bullying (deliberate, repeated aggression), but the pupil(s) involved in the bullying behaviour **do not** accept that they have broken the school rules and are unwilling to make amends for their behaviour, then the Relevant Teacher will meet with their parents and the principal.



The primary aim for the relevant teacher 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).

In investigating and dealing with bullying, the teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved.

Parents 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.

It is very important that all involved (including each set of pupils and parents) understand the above approach from the outset.

Non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher or principal.

- Children are reminded that the school is a 'telling school'. Talking to adults about incidents of bullying are helpful to both the bully and the bullied. Children are encouraged to speak to their parents at home about **everything** that happens in school.
- The 'Relevant Teacher' (normally the class teacher) investigates all instances of reported, anonymous or suspected bullying behaviour with a view to establishing the facts and bringing any such behaviour to an end. The principal may support the Relevant Teacher if he deems it appropriate. Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.
- If a teacher or the principal gets a complaint he/she must pass the issue to the Relevant Teacher of the pupil concerned. If there are more than one class involved, both class teachers will work together. The principal may support their efforts if he deems it appropriate.
- The Relevant Teacher will investigate the issue and use their own professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how to best resolve the situation. If there is no bullying then the issue is dealt with using the Code of Behaviour. With any allegation, the teacher will fill out the Investigation Report (see Appendix C) and forward it to the principal.
- If there is a group involved, each member should be interviewed individually. Afterwards they should meet 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 each other's statements. Pupils not directly involved can also provide useful information.

- The school, through the 'Relevant Teacher' or principal, reserves the right to ask any pupil to write an account of what happened (Pupil's Account of Incident - see Appendix D), as part of an investigation. This will be a standard procedure and does not necessarily imply that a pupil is guilty of misbehaviour.
- Pupils who are alleged to have been involved in bullying behaviour are interviewed by the 'Relevant Teacher' or principal to establish the nature and extent of the behaviour and any reasons for it. In the event that the child/ren have been deemed to be involved in bullying behaviour they will be spoken to by the 'Relevant Teacher' or principal.
- The 'Relevant Teacher' or principal treats bullying behaviour as a 'mistake' that can and must be remedied. S/he emphasises that the intention is to explain how harmful and hurtful bullying is and to seek an undertaking that it will stop. If that undertaking is forthcoming and is honoured there will be no sanction (other than contacting the child's parents and/or filling in a behaviour reflection sheet) 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. The 'relevant teacher' or principal may decide that the children who are involved in bullying behaviour have to complete a behaviour reflection form (Behaviour Reflection Form – see Appendix E).
- When an investigation is completed and/or a bullying situation is resolved the 'Relevant Teacher' will complete a report, to include the findings of the investigation, the strategy adopted and the outcome of the intervention, as well as any other relevant information. The teacher will use the Investigation Report form and forward it to the principal. If it is deemed to be bullying, then the principal will record it on the template for recording bullying behaviour.
- If a pupil who has given an undertaking that the bullying behaviour will stop but then chooses to break that undertaking and continues the bullying behaviour, this can then no longer be considered a 'mistake.' In this event parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed. Any further bullying behaviour is regarded as a very grave matter and a serious sanction may be imposed by the school authorities (see sanctions below). The parents of the bullied child will also be informed. A meeting will be arranged for the relevant teacher and principal/deputy principal to speak to the parents of the bullied child and the school's programme for supporting pupils who have been bullied discussed. A plan of action will be decided.
- All documentation regarding bullying incidents and their resolution is retained securely in the school.



- Our school will take into consideration the circumstances of children who have special educational needs and who engage in bullying behaviour but special educational needs will not be accepted as an excuse for such behaviour.

Sanctions

Where a pupil has been found to be engaged in bullying behaviour, has given an undertaking to stop and has broken that undertaking, the school's Code of Behaviour will be used and sanctions applied. These may include:

- 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 to end the bullying behaviour;
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) may be invited to a meeting with the 'Relevant Teacher' and the principal/deputy principal and the pupil may be suspended from school.
- The case may be referred to the Board of Management and the pupil may be expelled from the school.

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

- Pupils who have been bullied:
 - Ending the bullying behaviour in question.
 - Ensuring the school culture fosters respect for bullied pupils and all pupils.
 - Ensuring the school culture fosters empathy towards and support for bullied pupils.
 - Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the awareness-raising programme.
 - Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the speedy identification of those responsible and speedy resolution of bullying situations.



- Making appropriate facilities within the school available to support pupils (time to talk and share their feelings, reassurance, etc.) who need them in a timely manner and/or supporting a referral to an appropriate external agency.
 - 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).
- Pupils who bully:
 - Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are not punished.
 - Making it clear that bullying pupils who reform are doing the right and honourable thing and giving them praise for this.
 - 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.
 - Making appropriate facilities within the school available to support pupils (time to talk and share their feelings, reassurance, etc.) who need them in a timely manner and/or supporting a referral to an appropriate external agency.
 - In dealing with negative behaviour in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on, challenge and correct the behaviour while supporting the child.
 - In dealing with bullying behaviour, seeking resolution and apportioning no blame in return for keeping a promise to reform.

8. 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.



9. The Board of Management confirms that the school will, in accordance with its obligations under equality legislation, take all such steps as are reasonably practicable to prevent the harassment of pupils or staff on any of the nine grounds specified i.e. gender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.

10. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on ___/___/_____ [date].

11. 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 of Education and Skills and to the patron if requested. All parents/guardians of children being inducted into the school are made aware of the anti-bullying policy. Parents are asked to sign that they are aware of all school policies and support the staff in their efforts to provide a positive learning experience for the children in the school. Parents will be asked to sign this promise of support at the June meetings of new entrants.

12. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. 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. Parents/guardians will also receive an SMS or written notification of changes to the anti-bullying policy. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available to the Department of Education and Skills and to the Patron if requested.

Signed: Fr. Michael Byrne (Chairperson of Board of Management)

Date: 3rd October 2023

Signed: Mark Kelly (Principal)

Date: 3rd October 2023

Date of next review: September 2024



Appendix A

Bullying can take a number of forms. These may include any of the following (this list is not exhaustive):

Repeated aggressive behaviour/attitude/body language, for example:

- Shouting and uncontrolled anger
- Personal insults
- Verbal abuse
- Offensive language directed at an individual,
- Continually shouting or dismissing others
- Public verbal attacks/criticism
- Domineering behaviour
- Open aggression
- Offensive gestures and unwanted physical contact

Intimidation, either physical, psychological or emotional, for example:

- Treating people in a dictatorial manner
- Ridicule
- Persistent slagging
- Deliberate staring with the intent to discomfort
- Persistent rudeness in behaviour and attitude toward a particular individual
- Asking inappropriate questions/making inappropriate comments re. personal life/family
- Asking inappropriate questions/making inappropriate comments re. social life or schoolwork

Interference with property, for example:

- Stealing/damaging books or equipment
- Stealing/damaging clothing or other property



- Demanding money with menaces
- Persistently moving, hiding or interfering with property
- Marking/defacing property

Undermining/Public or Private Humiliation, for example:

- Condescending tone
- Deliberately withholding significant information and resources
- Writing of anonymous notes
- Malicious, disparaging or demeaning comments
- Malicious tricks/derogatory joke,
- Knowingly spreading rumours
- Belittling others' efforts, their enthusiasm or their new idea,
- Derogatory or offensive nicknames (name-calling)
- Using electronic or other media for any of the above (cyber bullying,
- Disrespectfully mimicking a particular individual in his/her absence
- Deliberately refusing to address issues focusing instead on the person

Ostracising or isolating, for example:

- Deliberately marginalising an individual
- Deliberately preventing a person from joining a group
- Deliberately preventing from joining in an activity, schoolwork-related or recreational
- Blaming a pupil for things s/he did not do



Appendix B

Combating Bullying and the Action towards Prevention:

Role of staff

- The principal and staff exercise constant vigilance in the matter of misbehaviour. Our aim is to prevent misbehaviour rather than control. Positive behaviour is always recognised, affirmed and sought.
- Any complaints of bullying are dealt with quickly, firmly and fairly following the procedures in the Anti-Bullying Policy.
- Awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour is addressed in the classroom, at school assemblies, through the school policy on pastoral care and other informal occasions when the opportunity arises.
- Pupils are taught skills and encouraged to report any incident of bullying.

Advice for Pupils

- Tell yourself that you do not deserve to be bullied, and that it is **WRONG**.
- Be proud of who you are. It is good to be individual.
- Try not to show that you are upset. It is hard but a bully thrives on someone's fear.
- Stay with a group of friends/people. There is safety in numbers.
- Be assertive – shout NO. Walk away confidently. Go straight to a teacher or member of staff.
- Reacting makes things worse– So don't react. Instead **REPORT** to a teacher or parent(s)/guardians instead. If you need support find a friend and both of you speak to the teacher.
- Generally it is best to tell an adult you trust straight away. You will get immediate support.

The teachers will take you seriously and will deal with bullies in a way which will end the bullying and will not make things worse for you.

If You Know Someone is Being Bullied:

- **TAKE ACTION** – Watching and doing nothing looks as if you are on the side of the bully. It makes the victim feel more unhappy and on their own.



- If you feel you cannot get involved, tell an adult **IMMEDIATELY**. Teachers have ways of dealing with the bully without getting you into trouble.
- Do not be, or pretend to be, friends with a bully.

Advice for Parents

- Look for unusual behaviour in your children. For example, they may suddenly not wish to attend school, feel ill regularly, or not complete work to their normal standard, ask for money or begin stealing money.
- Always take an active role in your child's education by enquiring how they are getting on.
- If you feel your child may be a victim of bullying behaviour, inform the school **IMMEDIATELY**. Your complaint will be taken seriously and appropriate action will follow.
- It is important to advise your child not to fight back. It can make matters worse.
- Tell your child there is nothing wrong with him/her. It is not her fault that they are being bullied.
- Make sure your child is fully aware of the School Policy concerning Bullying, and that they will not be afraid to ask for help.



Appendix C

Investigation Report

1. Nature of allegation/concern:

2. Date of allegation/concern: _____

3. Name of pupil allegedly subject to unwanted behaviour: _____

Class: _____

4. Name(s) and class(es) of pupils allegedly engaged in unwanted behaviour:

5. Source of allegation/concern:

Location of alleged incident(s)/concern

Pupil concerned	
Other pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other	

6. Name of person reporting the allegation/concern and any requests regarding the investigation:

Principal: Mr. Mark Kelly
Deputy Principal: Mrs. Anne O'Dowd



Chairperson: Fr. Michael Byrne

7. Type of unwanted behaviour alleged:

Physical aggression		Cyber-bullying	
Damage to property		Intimidation	
Isolation/exclusion		Malicious gossip	
Name-calling		Other (specify)	

8. Brief description of alleged unwanted behaviour and its impact

9. Details of action taken:



Signed: _____ (relevant teacher)

Date: _____

Date submitted to principal: _____

Appendix D

Pupil's Account of Incident

Principal: Mr. Mark Kelly
Deputy Principal: Mrs. Anne O'Dowd



Chairperson: Fr. Michael Byrne

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Date: _____

Relevant Teacher: _____

Appendix E



Behaviour Reflection Sheet

Name: _____

Date: _____

What I did:

Why I did it:

Why this behaviour was not acceptable:

What I should have done:

Signed: (parents) _____ Date _____

Signed: (child) _____ Date _____

Signed: (teacher) _____ Date _____