

ANTI-BULLYING POLICY

Scoil Naomh Colmcille, Durrow.

Introductory Statement

The school believes 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 everybody where it is made clear that bullying is a form of anti-social behaviour. It is important therefore that the school has a clear, written policy to promote this belief, where pupils and parent(s)/guardians are fully aware that any bullying complaints will be dealt with firmly, fairly and promptly.

Bullying is repeated aggression, verbal, psychological or physical, conducted by an individual or group against others. Isolated incidents of aggressive behaviour, although not condoned, cannot be described as bullying. However when the behaviour is systematic and ongoing it is bullying. Bullying affects everyone, not just the bullies and the victims. It also affects those children who watch and less aggressive pupils can be drawn in by the group pressure. Bullying is not an inevitable part of school life or a necessary part of growing up and it rarely sorts itself out.

TYPES OF BULLYING:

PHYSICAL: This includes punching, kicking, pushing, hitting or spitting etc. This also includes damaging property of a victim.

VERBAL: Verbal abuse can take the form of name-calling, abusive language, slander, taunting, threats etc.

EMOTIONAL: This includes isolation – exclusion from discussions/ activities, extortion – obtaining (e.g. money, lunch, sweets etc.) from a person by force or threat and using someone's identity to bully them, e.g: their race etc.

CYBER BULLYING: See our separate policy on cyber bullying.

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.
- The principal is informed of any instance of bullying.
- Awareness of bullying as a form of unacceptable behaviour is addressed in the classroom, at school assemblies and on any informal occasions when the opportunity arises.
- Pupils are taught skills and encouraged to report any incident of bullying in conjunction with our new *Stay Safe* and *Walk Tall* programmes throughout the school.

Advice for Pupils: (SAY NO, GET AWAY, TELL, Stay Safe Code)

- 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**. **Get away:** Walk away confidently. **Tell:** Go straight to a teacher or member of staff.
- Fighting back makes things worse– So don't fight back. **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.

All staff will promote through posters in each class and around the school the *Stay Safe Code: SAY NO, GET AWAY AND TELL (Appendix 1)* along with promoting some *Safety Tips(Appendix 2)* in dealing with bullying situations.

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.
(NB...**children should be made aware of these points on a regular basis**)

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.
- **Scoil Naomh Colmcille does not welcome bullies.**
(**Appendix 3 is also displayed in each classroom and around the school**)

Procedures for Noting and Reporting an incident of Bullying Behaviour

1. All incidents of bullying, no matter how trivial, will be recorded on *School Drive*, investigated and dealt with by teachers. In that way pupils will gain confidence in reporting. This confidence factor is of vital importance.
2. Serious cases of bullying behaviour by pupils will be referred immediately to the Principal.
3. Parents/guardians of victims and bullies will be informed by the Principal earlier rather than later of incidents so that they are given the opportunity of discussing the matter. They are then in a position to help and support their children before a crisis occurs.
4. Non-teaching staff are encouraged to report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, to the teaching staff.
5. In the case of a complaint regarding a staff member, this should normally in the first incidence be raised with staff member in question and if necessary, with the Principal.
6. Where cases, relating to either a pupil or a teacher remain unresolved at school level, the matter should be referred to the School's Board of Management (see Complaints Procedure).

Procedure for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying:

Teachers will take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff or parent(s)/guardians. Such incidents will be investigated outside the classroom situation to avoid the public humiliation of the victim or the pupil engaged in bullying behaviour. In any incident of bullying, the teacher will speak separately to the pupils involved, in an attempt to get both sides of the story. All interviews will be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide useful information in this way:

1. When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the teacher will seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner.
2. If a group is involved, each member will be interviewed individually and then the individuals are met as a group. Each member will be asked for his/her account of what happened to ensure that everyone is clear about what everyone also has said.
3. If it is concluded that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it will be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the Code of Behaviour and Discipline and try to get him/her to see the situation from the victim's point of view.
4. In cases where it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, a meeting or discussion will take place with the parents or guardians of the parties involved as appropriate to:
 - a) explain the actions being taken and the reasons for them, referring them to the school policy
 - b) Discuss ways in which they can reinforce or support the actions taken by the school.

Sanctions:

The use of sanctions is an important element in the school code. 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 are the same as those listed below for serious misdemeanours.

- Apology to the victim if appropriate.
- A record is kept on files of pupils involved. 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 activity if endangering self or others.
- Pupil is sent to Principal/Deputy Principal and made aware that suspension could be a possibility.
- In cases where it has been determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, the Principal/Deputy Principal informs parents.
- Suspension procedures may follow if deemed necessary by the school authorities.
- In certain situations, where appropriate, the class teacher, in consultation with the principal may deal with a particular situation using his or her discretion.

Disciplinary Actions and Sanctions to deal with Misdemeanours:

The degree of misdemeanours i.e. minor, serious or gross will be judged by the teachers and/or Principal based on a common sense approach with regard to the gravity/frequency of such misdemeanours.

Examples of Minor Misdemeanours:

- Interrupting class work/arriving late for school/running in school building/not listening and speaking out of turn/leaving seat without permission at break or lunch time/placing unfinished food in bins/leaving litter around school/not wearing correct uniform/being discourteous or unmannerly/not completing homework without good reason/bringing sweets and bars to school/wearing jewellery (Jewellery is not allowed except for one small stud earring in the bottom of each ear and a watch) / wearing make-up/belongings not named.
- Refusing to wear the school uniform in a continuous basis.

Examples of steps to be taken by teachers when dealing with Minor Misdemeanours

- The class teacher will normally deal with classroom misdemeanours.
- Verbal reprimand and reasoning with the pupil, including advice on how to improve, setting realistic targets.
- Time out from friends and others (to reflect on the misbehaviour).
- Loss of privileges such as ‘Golden Time’, Game time, extra recreation time etc.
- Noting incidence of yard misbehaviour in yard book.
- Note in homework journal or other to parents.

Examples of steps to be taken when dealing with REGULAR occurrences of Minor Misdemeanours:

- A record is kept of regular instances of misdemeanour.
- Following **three** instances of misdemeanour the pupil receives supervised detention on Friday during lunchtime.
- Class teacher communicates with parents sooner rather than later.
- Principal/Deputy Principal meets parent(s)/guardians concerning behaviour.

Examples of Serious Misdemeanours:

Constantly disruptive in class/telling lies/stealing/damaging or interfering with another person's property/bullying/back answering a teacher/leaving school premises during school day without appropriate permission/using or writing unacceptable language/ bringing chewing gum, glass bottles, correction fluids or other solvents to school/ deliberately injuring a fellow pupil or partaking in any activity which would put themselves or others in danger/deliberately leaving taps on/misuse of fire equipment/ bringing in mobile phones without permission

Examples of steps to be taken when dealing with Serious Misdemeanours:

- A record is kept of all serious misdemeanours.
- Pupils may be removed from activity if endangering self or others.
- Pupil is sent to Principal/Deputy Principal and made aware that suspension could be a possibility.
- Principal/Deputy Principal contacts parent/guardian.
- Suspension procedures may follow if deemed necessary by the school authorities.

Examples of Gross Misdemeanours:

Deliberately vandalizing school property/aggressive, threatening or violent behaviour towards a teacher or pupil. Bringing alcohol, drugs, cigarettes or matches to school.

Examples of steps to be taken when dealing with Gross Misdemeanours:

- A record is kept on the Google Drive.
- Principal/Deputy Principal contacts parent/guardian.
- Suspension or expulsion may be considered.

Suspension - Procedures

For gross misbehaviour or repeated instances of serious misbehaviour, suspension may be considered. Parents will be invited to come to the school to discuss their child's case. The Chairperson of the Board of Management will be informed. If the parents (and the pupil) do not give an undertaking that the pupil will behave in an acceptable manner in the future the pupil may be suspended for a period. Prior to suspension, where possible, the Principal may review the case in consultation with teachers and other members of the school community involved, with due regard to records of previous misbehaviours, their pattern and context, sanctions and other interventions used and their outcomes and any relevant medical information. Suspension will be in accordance with the Rules for National Schools and the Education Welfare Act 2000.

In the case of gross misbehaviour, where it is necessary to ensure that order and discipline are maintained and to secure the health and safety of pupils and teachers, the Board has deferred responsibility to the Principal to sanction an immediate suspension for a period not exceeding three school days, pending a discussion of the matter with the parents. Longer suspensions will require Board of Management approval. This approval may be obtained at a regular meeting of the Board or at an emergency meeting at which the Chairperson and Principal have outlined for the Board the reasons why they feel it is necessary to impose a further suspension. In line with the requirements of the Education Welfare Act (2000), the Board of Management will inform the Education Welfare Board when any pupil's period of suspension equals or exceeds six school days.

When a student is suspended, the parents/guardians will be requested to remove the student from the school. The Principal will meet with the parents/guardian to outline the decision to implement the suspension and will present the parents/guardian with a written statement of the terms, duration and date of the termination of the suspension.

Reinstatement

Following, or during a period of suspension, the parent/s may apply to have the pupil reinstated to the school. The parent/s (and pupil) must give a satisfactory undertaking that a suspended pupil will behave in accordance with the school code and the Principal must be satisfied that the pupil's reinstatement will not constitute a risk to the pupil's own safety or that of the other pupils or staff and will not have a seriously detrimental effect on the education of other pupils. The Principal in consultation with the parents, the class teacher and the pupil (if appropriate) will facilitate the preparation of a behaviour plan for the pupil, if required, and will re-admit the pupil formally to the class.

Where a satisfactory resolution of a problem is achieved, a pupil may be re-admitted to school within a suspension period at the discretion of the Chairperson of the Board and the Principal.

Expulsion

The Board of Management has the authority to expel a pupil in an extreme case where repeated incidents of serious misbehaviour interfere with the educational opportunities of fellow students or where there is a threat to the health and safety of either students or staff.

Where expulsion is considered the school authorities will have tried a range of other interventions and will have formed the opinion that they have exhausted all possibilities for changing the pupil's behaviour. This sanction would be imposed under the terms of the Education Welfare Act (2000).

Under the Education Welfare Act, 2000, 'A student shall not be expelled from a school before the passing of twenty school days following the receipt of a notification under this section by an educational welfare officer' (Section 24(4).) It is the right of a Board of Management to take '...such other reasonable measures as it considers appropriate to ensure that good order and discipline are maintained in the school concerned and that the safety of students is secured.' (Section 24(5))

Appeals

Under Section 29 of the Education Act, 1998, parents are entitled to appeal to the Secretary General of the Department of Education and Skills against some decisions of the Board of Management, including (1) permanent exclusion from a school and (2) suspension for a period which would bring the cumulative period of suspension to 20 school days or longer in any one school year.

The Principal will advise parents of this right of appeal and associated timeframe if it has been decided to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil. A copy of the circular (22/02) outlining the appeals procedure as well as an application form will be sent to the parents by post.

Appeals must generally be made within 42 calendar days from the date the decision of the school was notified to the parent or student.

The school Principal will prepare a response if and when the Dept. of Education and Skills are investigating an appeal.

SUCCESS CRITERIA: (by which the policy will be judged)

- Atmosphere of discipline within the school.
- Children are aware of school rules.
- Staff apply school rules.
- Growth in self discipline.
- Co-operation between parents, teachers and pupils in maintaining the code.
- Comments or compliments on behaviour.
- Children working to the best of their ability.
- Class working to the best of their ability.
- Improvements in behaviour.

MONITORING AND REVIEW:

Each staff member is responsible for the implementation of the Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policy through resources such as: *Stay Safe* and *Walk Tall* programmes. Within the

classroom the teacher monitors his/her class. Teachers consider themselves responsible for the behaviour of children within sight or sound of them and respond to any instance of unacceptable behaviour. The principal is responsible for monitoring and reviewing Policy at staff level on a regular basis and reports any review the staff deem necessary to the Board of Management.

The Board of Management (BOM) has ultimate responsibility for discipline in the school under its management and a duty to ensure that a fair code of discipline applies therein. The BOM will ensure the Code of Behaviour and Anti-Bullying policy is reviewed yearly or more often if the need arises.

In registering children in Scoil Cholmcille, parents are expected to support teachers in following the policies and procedures of the school. A copy of all policies and procedures is available for view by all parents. Parents are informed at the start of every school year that they may receive a copy of all policies and procedures if they so wish.

Reviewed and updated by staff members in: October 2018

Signed by and on behalf of BOM:

_____ **Date:** _____
Mary Daly (Chairperson)

Signed by on behalf of Scoil Naomh Colmcille:

_____ **Date:** _____
Frank Kelly (Principal)

Next Review Date: October 2019

Appendix 1

Safety Tips

If You are Bullied...

- Stand Tall and Straight
- Deep Breath
- Look the person in the eye
- Speak clearly and in a calm voice
- Start by saying:
“I don’t like what you are doing.
I want it to stop....”



