gaelscoil Faithleann

Uimhir Rolla 19941 I

An Pháirc, Cill Airne, Co Chiarraí. V93 WP62
Guthán: 064 6634930   Ríomhphost: oifig@gsfaithleann.ie

Polasaí Frith Bhullaíochta – Anti – Bullying Policy

This policy is designed to assist the community of Gaelscoil Faithleann in devising school – based measures to prevent and deal with bullying behaviour taking place at Gaelscoil Faithleann and on all school activities, and to increase awareness of bullying behaviour in the school community as a whole (e.g., school management, teaching and non-teaching staff, pupils and parents, as well as those from the local community who interact with the school). Involving and encouraging all the members of the school community in developing, formulating and reviewing this policy on bullying promotes partnership, ownership and implementation of a "living policy", one which is actively implemented/promoted in the whole school community. The school climate and atmosphere are created by the actions of everyone in the school. The behaviour of the adults in a child's life, including parents and teachers, is a significant influence on how a child acts.

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 Gaelscoil Faithleann 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)   A positive school culture and climate which.

* Is welcoming of difference and diversity and is based on inclusivity.
* Acknowledges the right of each member of the school community to enjoy school in a secure environment.
* Encourages pupils to disclose and discuss incidents of bullying behaviour in a non-threatening environment.
* Recognises the role of other community agencies in preventing and dealing with bullying.
* Promotes respectful relationships across the school community and an understanding of interdependence among the school community.
* Promotes and rewards good behaviour.

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- Explains to pupils the need for good behaviour and respect for others.
- Does not tolerate discriminatory and derogatory language.
- Ensures adequate school yard/outdoor supervision
- Is aware of "hotspots" for bullying in school.
- Promotes the statement "it is nice to be nice to others"
- Encourages open and early communication between the school community.

(b)   Effective leadership

(c)   A school- wide approach

(d)   A shared understanding of what bullying is and its impact

(e)   Implementation of education and prevention strategies (including awareness raising measures) that -

- Build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils.
- Explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying

(f)   Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils

(g)   Supports for staff

(h)   Consistent recording, investigation and follow up of bullying behaviour (including use of established intervention strategies) and

(i)   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,
- Extortion and intimidation
- Damage to property of another

- Physical aggression to include pushing, punching, kicking, poking and tripping up people. It also may take the form of severe physical assault.
- Cyber – bullying and bullying through misuse of technology.
- 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 the 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.

The list of examples below is non exhaustive, and the school will add behaviours which will arise from time to time.

Examples of bullying behaviours

General behaviours which apply to all types of bullying	- Harassment based on any of the nine grounds in the equality legislation e.g., sexual harassment, homophobic bullying, racist bullying etc. - Physical aggression - Damage to property - Name calling - Slagging - The production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other materials aimed at intimidating another person - Offensive graffiti

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	• Extortion • Intimidation • Insulting or offensive gestures • The "look" • Invasion of personal space • A combination of any of the types listed.
Cyber	• Denigration: Spreading rumours, lies or gossip to hurt a person's reputation • Harassment: Continually sending vicious, mean or disturbing messages to an individual • Impersonation: Posting offensive or aggressive messages under another person's name • Flaming: Using inflammatory or vulgar words to provide an online fight • Trickery: Fooling someone into sharing confidential or compromising information or images • Exclusion: Purposefully excluding someone from an online group • Cyber stalking: Ongoing harassment and denigration that causes a person considerable fear for his/her safety • Silent telephone/mobile phone calls • Abusive telephone/mobile phone calls • Abusive text messages • Abusive email • Abusive communication on social networks e.g., Facebook/Ask.fm/Twitter/You Tube or on games consoles • Abusive website comments/Blogs/Pictures • Abusive posts on any form of communication technology
Identity Based Behaviours Including any of the nine discriminatory grounds mentioned in Equality Legislation (gender including transgender, civil status, family status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race and membership of the Traveller community.	
Homophobic and Transgender	• Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation

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	• Taunting a person of a different sexual orientation • Name calling e.g. Gay, queer, lesbian…used in a derogatory manner • Physical intimidation or attacks • Threats
Race, nationality, ethnic background and membership of the Traveller community	• Discrimination, prejudice, comments or insults about colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveller background • Exclusion on the basis of any of the above
Relational	This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include: • Malicious gossip • Isolation & exclusion • Ignoring • Walking away when person joins group • Excluding from the group • Taking someone's friends away • "Bitching" • Spreading rumours • Breaking confidence • Talking loud enough so that the victim can hear • The "look" • Use or terminology such as "nerd" in a derogatory way
Sexual	• Unwelcome or inappropriate sexual comments or touching • Harassment

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Special Educational Needs, Disability	• Name calling • Taunting others because of their disability or learning needs • Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to recognise and defend themselves against bullying • Taking advantage of some pupils' vulnerabilities and limited capacity to understand social situations and social cues. • Mimicking a person's disability • Setting others up for ridicule

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

- Principal
- Deputy Principal
- All class teachers
- Learning support/resource teachers
- All other staff

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

In the case of bullying by an adult; staff member/parent, the principal will act as relevant teacher.
In the case where the principal is involved, the deputy principal will act as relevant teacher.

5. The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber – Bullying, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows (also see Section 6.5 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post- Primary Schools):

Education and prevention strategies

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School – wide approach

- A school – wide approach of the fostering of respect for all members of the school community.
- The promotion of the value of diversity to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- The fostering and enhancing of the self-esteem of all our pupils through both curricular and extracurricular activities. Pupils will be provided with opportunities to develop a positive sense of self-worth through formal and informal interactions.
- Praising pupils regularly.
- Whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develop an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts on pupils' lives and the need to respond to it – prevention and intervention.
- An annual audit of professional development needs with a view to assessing staff requirements through internal staff knowledge/expertise and external sources.
- Professional development with specific focus on the training of the relevant teacher(s).
- School wide awareness raising and training on all aspects of bullying, to include pupils, parents(s) and the wider school community.
- Supervision and monitoring of classrooms, corridors, school grounds, school tours and extra-curricular activities. Non – teaching and ancillary staff will be encouraged to be vigilant and report issues to relevant teachers. Supervision will also apply to monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.
- Involvement of the students in contributing to a safe school environment e.g. Helping in classroom, Lunchtime Pals and other student support activities that can help to support pupils and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- Development and promotion of an Anti-Bullying code for the school - to be discussed in classrooms and regularly at school assemblies.
- The school's anti-bullying policy is discussed with pupils and all parent(s)/guardian(s) are given a copy as part of the Code of Behaviour of the school (every year).
- The implementation of regular (e.g. per year/per term/per month/per week) whole school awareness measures e.g. a dedicated notice board in the school and classrooms on the promotion of friendship, and bullying prevention; annual Friendship Week and parent(s)/guardian(s) seminars; annual or term or monthly student surveys; regular school or year group assemblies by principal, etc.

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- Encourage a culture of telling, with particular emphases on the importance of by-standers. In that way pupils will gain confidence in "telling". This confidence factor is of vital importance. It should be made clear to all pupils that when they report incidents of bullying, they are not considered to be telling tales but are behaving responsibly.
- Ensuring that pupils know who to tell and how to tell e.g.:
    - Direct approach to teacher at an appropriate time, for example after class.
    - Hand note up with homework.
    - Make a phone call to the school or to a trusted teacher in the school.
    - Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
    - Administer a confidential questionnaire to all pupils if bullying is becoming an issue in a particular class to monitor the behaviour.
    - Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.
- The revision annually of an Acceptable Use Policy in the school to include the necessary steps to ensure that the access to technology within the school is strictly monitored.
- The listing of supports currently being used in the school and the identification of other supports available in the school.
- The full implementation of the SPHE, the RSE and Stay Safe Programmes.
- Continuous Professional Development for staff in delivering these programmes, e.g., Stay Safe Programme, The walk Tall Programme, Kerry Life Education programme etc.
- Request the delivery of the Garda SPHE Programmes. These lessons, delivered by Community Gardai, cover issues around personal safety and cyber-bullying.
- The school will specifically consider the additional needs of SEN pupils with regard to programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.

Links to other policies
- The following policies and practices are particularly relevant to bullying, e.g. Code of Behaviour, Child Protections policy, Supervision of pupils, Acceptable Use policy, Policy of Manners. This list will be added to each year as needed.

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 (see Section 6.8 of the Anti-Bullying Post-Primary Schools):

6.8.9   Procedures for Investigating and Dealing with Bullying

The primary aim of 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);

The school's procedures must be consistent with the following approach. Every effort will be made to ensure that all involved (including pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s)) understand this approach from the outset.

Summary of Procedure at Gaelscoil Faithleann

1. <u>Report allegation is made</u> and documented (Appendix A).
2. <u>Allegation is investigated</u> by investigating teacher and all action written in factual form on "Action taken report". This will include details and dates of meeting with children, parents, principal etc. (Appendix A1).
3. <u>If no bullying is proven,</u> no action needed, unless allegation is a once off incident which will be disciplined as per the school's discipline policy.
4. <u>If bullying is proven;</u>
    A. The teacher corrects the pupil and an oral promise is made by him/her to stop the bullying. If step 4A only the next step is step 5.
    B. Depending on the severity of the alleged bullying, Parents of the alleged bully will be contacted and parents of the child being bullied will be contacted to inform them of the outcome of the investigation. The investigating teacher can ask The Principal for guidance on this.
    C. If parents are contacted at stage 4B the next stage will be stage 6.
5. <u>If bullying continues:</u>
    A. The teacher corrects the pupil and an oral promise made by him/her again to stop the bullying.
    B. Parents/Guardians of the alleged bully will be contacted to inform them by the investigating teacher.
    C. Parents of the alleged child being bullied will also be informed of outcomes.
6.<u>If bullying still continues;</u>
    A. The Principal is informed.
    B. The Principal investigates the allegation. All information available form the initial investigation and recent allegations will be used.

C. The Principal contacts parents of the alleged bully. It is explained to the child and parents/guardians that if the bullying continues that the next stage will include Level 2 discipline actions.

D. The child makes an oral promise to stop the alleged behaviour to the principal in the presence of his/her parents/guardians.

E. Parents of the alleged child being bullied will also be contacted to inform them of the outcomes.

7. <u>If bullying continues</u>

Level 2 discipline actions from the code of behaviour will be applied. These may include suspension, report being made to the Board of Management, implementation of an extensive Behaviour Management plan etc.

8. If bullying continues

Level 3 disciplinary actions will be applied which may include suspension for longer periods and/or expulsion.

<u>Reporting bullying behaviour</u>

- Any pupil or parent(s)/guardian(s) may bring a bullying incident to any teacher in the school.
- All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying, will be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher.
- Teaching and non-teaching staff such as secretaries, special needs assistants (SNAs), bus escorts, caretakers, cleaners must report any incidents of bullying behaviour witnessed by them, or mentioned to them, to the relevant teacher;

<u>Investigating and dealing with incidents: Style of approach</u>

- In investigating and dealing with bullying, the (relevant) teacher will exercise his/her professional judgement to determine whether bullying has occurred and how best the situation might be resolved;
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) 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, relationships of the parties involved as quickly as possible;
- Parents/Guardians are requested to allow the school to deal with an allegation of school-based bullying once made and not to "take matters into their own hands" by meeting with the alleged bully or the parents of the alleged bully separate to the school investigation.
- Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach.
- Where possible incidents should be investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved;

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- All interviews should be conducted with sensitivity and with due regard to the rights of all pupils concerned. Pupils who are not directly involved can also provide very useful information in this way;
- When analysing incidents of bullying behaviour, the relevant teacher should seek answers to questions of what, where, when, who and why. This should be done in a calm manner, setting an example in dealing effectively with a conflict in a non-aggressive manner;
- If a group is involved, each member should be interviewed individually at first. Thereafter, all those involved should be met 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;
- Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that may face them from the other members of the group after the interview by the teacher;
  It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s).
- In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred the procedure as outlined above will be followed;
- Where relevant teacher has determined that a pupil has been engaged in bullying behaviour, it should be made clear to him/her how he/she is in breach of the school's anti-bullying policy and efforts should be made to try to get him/her to see the situation from the perspective of the pupil being bullied;
- It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parent(s)/guardian(s)) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) and the school;

Follow up and recording

- In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgement, take the following factors into account:
  -Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
  -Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
  -Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable;
  -Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parent(s)/guardian(s) or the school Principal or Deputy Principal

- Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved may be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together at a later date if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable.

- Where a parent(s)/guardian(s) is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures.
- In the event that a parent(s)/guardian(s) has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school will advise the parent(s)/guardian(s) of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for children.

Recording of bullying behaviour

It is imperative that all recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner.

The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour are as follows:

Informal – predetermination that bullying has occurred
- All staff must keep a written record of any incidents witnessed by them or notified to them. This will be on (Appendix A) incident report form. All incidents must be reported to the relevant teacher.
- While all reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher, the relevant teacher must keep a written record of the reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same (Appendix A)

Determination that bullying has occurred
- If it is established by the relevant teacher that bullying has occurred, the relevant teacher must keep appropriate written records which will assist his/her efforts to resolve the issues and restore, as far as is practicable, the relationships of the parties involved. This will be included on the incident report form A.
- All records will be retained by the relevant teacher in a file that will be sent on to the next class teacher at the end of year.

The relevant teacher must continue and add to the recording template at Appendix A to record the bullying behaviour in the following circumstances:
a) In cases where he/she considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed.
b) The school has decided as part of its anti-bullying policy that in certain circumstances bullying behaviour must be recorded and reported immediately to the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable.

Behaviours from the school's discipline policy that form part of anti-bullying that must be recorded and reported immediately to the principal. This list is not exhaustive;

- Using mobile recording devices at school i.e. iPods, I Pads, phones etc.
- Uploading recordings made at school or on school activities onto the internet.
- Biting others
- Spitting at others
- Throwing stones at others
- Intentionally damaging others property
- Stealing others property
- Derogatory reference to race, gender, religion, physical condition, disability, ethnic origin.

The recording template must be retained by the relevant teacher in question and be available to the principal. It shall be stored in the school classroom and forwarded to the relevant teacher at the end of the year in the file provided.
The Principal will make a copy of the template as needed and this copy will be stored in the Principals Office.

Established intervention strategies

- Teacher interviews with all pupils.
- Principal does class survey with pupils if difficult allegation is being investigated (Appendix E).
- Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress documented by teacher/principal.
- Working with parent(s)/guardian(s) to support school interventions.
- No Blame Approach.
- Circle Time.
- Discussion of bullying in general in classroom and at assemblies.
- Inviting an outside agency/professional to talk to class.

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

- All in-school supports and opportunities will be provided for the pupils affected by bullying to participate in activities designed to raise their self-esteem, to develop friendships and social skills and build resilience e.g.
- Anti bullying campaign.ie
- Buddy system
- Group work such as circle time
- RSE

- Stay Safe Programme
- Religious Education Programme
- Roots of Empathy programme
- Mindfulness programmes
- Use of Intercom to address bullying
- Seachtain na gCairde/ Friendship Week
- Yard booklets – daily incidents
- Principal visits classrooms

- If pupils require counselling or further supports the school will endeavour to liaise with the appropriate agencies to organise same. This may be for the pupil affected by bullying or involved in the bullying behaviour.

- Pupils should understand that there are no innocent bystanders and that all incidents of bullying behaviour must be reported to a teacher.

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. Particular areas where bullying can take place have been recognised as "Hotspots" and are as follows;

   o Coming to school and lining up in morning.
   o When a teacher must leave a classroom to meet a parent, take a phone call, go to toilet etc.
   o Children going out at lunch time or at PE time.
   o Standing in lines at end of break.
   o Group work in classrooms/school yard etc.
   o School Playground.
   o Sports activities.
   o Nature walks, school tours, outdoor activities etc.
   o Children going into classrooms at end of breaks.
   o Children leaving the school in the evening.

9. 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.

10. This policy was adopted by the Board of Management on January 26th, 2015.

11. This policy has been made available to school personnel, is readily accessible to parents on request and is published in the parents booklet each year. A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department and the patron if requested.

12. This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year.

13. The draft policy was discussed at 2 Parents Council Meetings, 3 Board of Management meetings and 5 Teachers Meetings while being formulated.

Signed: Máire Ní Riain   Signed: Lisa Ní Iarlaithe
       (Chairperson of Board of Management)   (Principal)

Date: 21/10/2024   Date: 21/10/2024