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Anti- Bullying Policy

- **Bullying is repeatedly, deliberately hurting someone or their feelings.**
- **In school we are alert to bullying and we speak out to stop it.**
- **Our school has a system for investigating and dealing with bullying.**

Date of last Review & Ratification: May 2024

The following documents must be read in conjunction with this policy:
   a) Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post- Primary Schools
   b) Circular 045/2013

Anti-Bullying Policy

1. Introductory Statement

In accordance with the requirements of the Education (Welfare) Act 2000 and the Code of Behaviour Guidelines issued by the National Educational Welfare Board 2008 (NEWB), the Board of Management (BoM) of Scoil Asicus Naofa 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. Rationale

The Board of Management recognises the very serious nature of bullying and the negative impact that it can have on the lives of pupils. Scoil Asicus Naofa is therefore fully committed to the following key principles of best practice in preventing and tackling bullying behaviour.

The Anti-Bullying Policy enables **the school to manage bullying effectively by;**

- promoting the school code of behaviour,
- discouraging bullying, and
- responding to incidents of bullying

Scoil Asicus Naofa is 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;

- 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-

  o build empathy, respect and resilience in pupils; and

o explicitly address the issues of cyber-bullying and identity-based bullying including in particular, homophobic and transphobic bullying;

- Effective supervision and monitoring of pupils;

- Supports for staff

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

- On-going evaluation of the effectiveness of the anti-bullying policy.

3. Definition of Bullying

(For further information please refer to pages 9-11 of *Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools* from 2.1 to 2.2. Also see **Appendix 1** to this policy for further examples of bullying)

The Department's report Cinealtas (2022) defines bullying as:

> Bullying is targeted behaviour, online or offline, that causes harm. The harm caused can be physical, social and/or emotional in nature. Bullying behaviour is repeated over time and involves an imbalance of power in relationships between two people or groups of people in society.

The following types of bullying behaviour are included in the definition of bullying:
- deliberate exclusion, malicious gossip, and other forms of relational bullying,
- cyber-bullying, and
- identity-based bullying such as homophobic bullying, racist (skin colour) bullying, ethnic bullying (eg. 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 offensive or hurtful text messages or other private messaging do not fall within the definition of bullying. These incidents are dealt with, as appropriate, within 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 and the school reserves the right to inform parents where this occurs.

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.

4. Investigating and dealing with bullying

Incidents of bullying will be investigated and dealt with by the following staff members; :
- All class teachers
- Resource and learning support teachers
- The principal,
- The deputy principal.

5. Education and Prevention Strategies
(For further information please refer to pages 26-28 of ***Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools*** from 6.5.1 to 6.6.2 for information guidelines)

The education and prevention strategies (including strategies specifically aimed at cyber-bullying, race, ethnicity, homophobic and transphobic bullying) that will be used by the school are as follows:

Whole School- Approach
- Encouraging a school-wide approach to foster respect for all members of the school community.
- Promoting the value of diversity and inclusion to address issues of prejudice and stereotyping, and highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- Fostering and enhancing the self-esteem of all pupils in Scoil Asicus Naofa 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.)
- Providing whole staff professional development on bullying to ensure that all staff develop an awareness of what bullying is, how it impacts pupils' lives and the need to respond to it throughprevention and intervention.
- Having an annual audit of the professional development needs of staff members with a view to assessing staff requirements through internal staff knowledge/expertise and external sources.
- Providing awareness raising and training to the whole school community (including pupils, parent(s)/guardian(s) and the wider school community) on all aspects of bullying. (*November 2023 – Presentation to children and parents on cyber safety and cyber-bullying by Jeremy Pagden of Lurtel).*
- Supervising 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.

- Supervising and monitoring student use of communication technology within the school.
- Using the Broadband Filtering Network and the school's mobile phone policy to minimise the scope for cyber-bulling to occur because of access to technology from within the school.
- Managing and moderating the school website and X (Twitter) account by teachers to ensure that no hurtful comments are posted.
- Reporting any attempts by pupils to post hurtful or inappropriate content on social media to parents.
- Discouraging parents from allowing their children to use Facebook and other such social networking sites on grounds of lower age limits which preclude Primary school children from using them. Since these sites cannot be accessed at school, incidents of cyber- bullying occurring on them are outside the remit of the school. However, if the school becomes aware of incidents of cyber-bullying outside of school, the school reserves the right to become involved in cautioning pupils against such behaviour and informing parents.
- Having Lunchtime Buddies for Junior Classes to help and support pupils, and encourage a culture of peer respect and support.
- Developing and promoting of an Anti-Bullying Code for the school, which will be included in student journals and displayed publicly in classrooms and in common areas of the school.
- Discussing the school's anti-bullying policy with pupils and making it available to all parent(s)/guardian(s) s via the school website.
- Developing a simplified version of the policy which would be made available to all children.
- Implementing of regular whole-school awareness measures such as:
  - a dedicated notice board in the school
  - school assemblies
  - the school newsletter
  - student surveys
- Encouraging a culture of telling, with particular emphasis on the importance of bystanders. This will enable pupils to gain confidence in 'telling. This confidence factor is of vital importance, and 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 up note with homework.
  - Make a phone call to the school or to a trusted teacher in the school.
  - Anti-bully or Niggle box
  - Get a parent(s)/guardian(s) or friend to tell on your behalf.
  - Administer a confidential questionnaire to all pupils.

- Ensure bystanders understand the importance of telling if they witness or know that bullying is taking place.

- Identifying and developing clear protocols to encourage parent(s)/guardian(s) to approach the school if they suspect that their child is being bullied. The protocol should be developed in consultation with parents.

Implementation of curricula
- Ensuring the full implementation of the SPHE and RSE and Stay Safe and Grow in Love Programmes.
- Using school wide delivery of lessons on bullying from evidence-based programmes, e.g. *Stay Safe Programme, The Walk Tall Programme, Anti-Bullying Campaign via its website (Sean Fallon)*
- Specifically considering the additional needs of pupils with SEN about programme implementation and the development of skills and strategies to enable all pupils to respond appropriately.
- Ensuring the use of the available space within the teaching of all subjects to foster an attitude of respect for all, to promote the value of diversity, to address prejudice and stereotyping, and to highlight the unacceptability of bullying behaviour.
- Seeking to ensure an annual talk to children about online safety and cyber-bullying to be provided by an outside agency with expertise in this area.

Other related policies
- Code of Behaviour
- Child Protection Policy
- Supervision of pupils
- Acceptable Use policy,
- Attendance Policy
- School Ethos
- Sporting activities.

6. **Procedures for investigation, follow-up and recording of bullying behaviour**

Scoil Asicus Naofa's procedures for investigating, dealing with, 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 (Taken from Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary schools Section 6.8);

Our 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);

Investigating and dealing with incidents:

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

II. All reports, including anonymous reports of bullying must be investigated and dealt with by the relevant teacher. 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;

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

IV. 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;

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

VI. Teachers should take a calm, unemotional problem-solving approach when dealing with incidents of alleged bullying behaviour reported by pupils, staff, or parents;

VII. Incidents are generally best investigated outside the classroom situation to ensure the privacy of all involved.

VIII. 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;

IX.   Each member of a group should be supported through the possible pressures that they may face them from the other members of the group after interview by the teacher;

X.   It may also be appropriate or helpful to ask those involved to write down their account of the incident(s);

XI.   In cases where it has been determined by the relevant teacher that bullying behaviour has occurred, the parents of the parties involved should be contacted at an early stage to inform them of the matter and explain the actions being taken (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;

XII.   Where the 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;

XIII.   It must also be made clear to all involved (each set of pupils and parents) that in any situation where disciplinary sanctions are required, this is a private matter between the pupil being disciplined, his or her parents and the school;

XIV.   Follow-up meetings with the relevant parties involved should be arranged separately with a view to possibly bringing them together later if the pupil who has been bullied is ready and agreeable. This can have a therapeutic effect;

XV.   In cases where the relevant teacher considers that the bullying behaviour has not been adequately and appropriately addressed within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour has occurred, it must berecorded by the relevant teacher in the recording template at **Appendix 2** (See Section 6.8.10 (iii));

Follow up
I.   In determining whether a bullying case has been adequately and appropriately addressed the relevant teacher must, as part of his/her professional judgment, take the following factors into account:

        o   Whether the bullying behaviour has ceased;
        o   Whether any issues between the parties have been resolved as far as is practicable;
        o   Whether the relationships between the parties have been restored as far as is practicable; and

- o   Any feedback received from the parties involved, their parents or the school Principal or Deputy Principal.

II.   Where a parent is not satisfied that the school has dealt with a bullying case in accordance with these procedures, the parents must be referred, as appropriate, to the school's complaints procedures;

III.   If a parent has exhausted the school's complaints procedures and is still not satisfied, the school must advise the parents of their right to make a complaint to the Ombudsman for Children.

Procedures for recording bullying behaviour

It is imperative that recording of bullying incidents must be done in an objective and factual manner. The school's procedures for noting and reporting bullying behaviour will adhere to the following:

Informal Stage: pre-determination that bullying has occurred
- All staff must keep a written record of any incident witnessed by them or notified to them. These records will be kept in the incident book. 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 will use his/her professional judgment in relation to the records to be kept of these reports, the actions taken and any discussions with those involved regarding same;

Formal Stage 1: 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.
- The relevant teacher will retain records at this stage.

Formal Stage 2: Appendix 3 (From the Department of Education and Skills Procedures)

- The relevant teacher must use the recording template at Appendix 2 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 within 20 school days after he/she has determined that bullying behaviour occurred;
    (b) Where 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 as applicable.

In each of the circumstances at (a) and (b) above, the recording template at **Appendix 2** must be completed in full and retained by the teacher in question and a copy provided to

the Principal or Deputy Principal as applicable. It should also be noted that the timeline for recording bullying behaviour in the recording template at **Appendix 2** does not in any way preclude the relevant teacher from consulting the Principal or Deputy Principal at an earlier stage in relation to a case.

In cases where the school has serious concerns in relation to managing the behaviour of a pupil, advice from the National Educational Psychological Services (NEPS) will be sought. The school will refer serious incidents, where the behaviour is regarded as abusive, to the HSE Children & Family Services and/or Gardai as deemed appropriate. This may be done through the Designated Liaison Person (DLP) – which is the school Principal.

Established intervention strategies

- Teacher interviews with all pupils involved
- Negotiating agreements between pupils and following these up by monitoring progress. This can be on an informal basis or implemented through a more structured mediation process
- Working with parent(s)/guardian(s)s to support school interventions
- No Blame Approach
- Circle Time
- Restorative interviews
- Restorative conferencing
- Administering questionnaires (as suggested in Sean Fallon -Anti-Bullying campaign)

7. Programme of Support

The school's programme of support for working with pupils affected by bullying is as follows (see page 35-36 - 6.8.16 of the Anti-Bullying Procedures for Primary and Post-Primary Schools):

- **Pupils who have been Bullied**:
    - Ending the bullying behaviour
    - Indicating clearly that the bullying is not the fault of the targeted pupil through the speedy identification of those responsible and speedy resolutions of bullying situations.
    - 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)
    - Improving the school culture to foster greater empathy towards and support for bullied pupils.
    - Improving the school culture to foster more respect for bullied pupils and all pupils.

- **Pupils who have engaged in Bullying Behaviour**:
  - Making it clear that bullying behaviour will not be tolerated
  - Making it clear that pupils who have previously engaged in bullying behaviour but have reformed are not blamed and will get a "clean sheet".
  - Making it clear that pupils who have previously engaged in bullying behaviour but have reformed are doing the right and honourable thing and giving them praise for this.
  - Providing support to those who need to learn other ways of meeting their needs besides violating the rights of others.
  - 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)

- **Overall**
  - Using learning strategies throughout the school and the curriculum to help enhance pupils' feelings of self-worth. In dealing with negative behaviour in general, encouraging teachers and parents to focus on challenging and correcting the behaviour while supporting the child.
  - In dealing with bullying behaviour, seeking resolution, and offering a fresh start in return for a commitment to reform.

8. Supervision and Monitoring of Pupils.

The Board of Management of Scoil Asicus Naofa 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. Prevention of Harassment

The Board of Management of Scoil Asicus Naofa confirms that appropriate policies and practices are in place to both prevent and deal with harassment behaviour and to facilitate early intervention where possible.

10. Ratification

This policy was ratified by the Board of Management on **28 May 2024.**

11. Availability and Implementation

This policy has been made available to school personnel, published on the school website (or where none exists is otherwise readily available to parents and pupils on request) and provided to the Parents' Association where one exists). A copy of this policy will be made available to the Department of Education and the patron if requested.

This policy and its implementation will be reviewed by the Board of Management once in every school year. Written notification that the review has been completed will be made

available to school personnel, published on the school website, and provided to the Parents' Association. A record of the review and its outcome will be made available if requested to the patron and the Department of Education.

Signed:

Chairperson BOM   Date: 28th May 2024.

Príomhoide   Date: 28th May 2024.

Date of next review: Oct / Nov meeting of BOM 2024

Appendix 1: Specific examples of bullying behaviour
* The list of examples below is non exhaustive.

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 • Extortion • Intimidation • Insulting or offensive gestures • The "look" • Invasion of personal space • A combination of any of the types listed.
Cyber	• **Denigration**: Spreading rumors, 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 provoke an online fight • **Trickery**: Fooling someone into sharing personal information which you then post online • **Outing**: Posting or 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 call • 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 Traveler community).	
Homophobic and Transgender	• Spreading rumours about a person's sexual orientation • 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 skin colour, nationality, culture, social class, religious beliefs, ethnic or traveler background • Exclusion based on any of the above
Relational	This involves manipulating relationships as a means of bullying. Behaviours include: • Malicious gossip • Isolation & exclusion • Ignoring • 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
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

Appendix 2: Template for recording bullying behaviour

1. Name of pupil being bullied and class group

Name _____Class_____

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

_____
_____

_____
_____

_____
_____

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

Pupil concerned	
Other Pupil	
Parent	
Teacher	
Other	

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

Playground	
Classroom	
Corridor	
Toilets	
School Bus	
Other	

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

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

Physical Aggression		Cyber-bullying	
Damage to Property		Intimidation	
Isolation/Exclusion		Malicious Gossip	
Name Calling		Other (specify)	

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

Homophobic	Disability/SEN related	Racist	Membership of Traveller community	Other (specify)

8. Brief Description of bullying behaviour and its impact


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9.   Details of actions taken

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10. **Outcome of review within or at 20 days.**

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Signed _____ (Relevant Teacher)

Date _____

Date submitted to Principal/Deputy Principal _____

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

Appendix 3 Practical tips for building a positive school culture and climate

- Always model respectful behaviour to all members of the school community.
- Explicitly teach pupils what respectful language and respectful behaviour looks like, acts like, sounds like and feels like in class and around the school.
- Display key respect messages in classrooms, in assembly areas and around the school. Involve pupils in the development of these messages.
- Catch them being good - notice and acknowledge desired respectful behaviour by providing positive attention.
- Consistently tackle the use of discriminatory and derogatory language in the school – this includes homophobic and racist language and language that is belittling of pupils with a disability or SEN.
- Give constructive feedback to pupils when respectful behaviour and respectful language are absent.
- Have a system of encouragement and rewards to promote desired behaviour and compliance with the school rules and routines.
- Explicitly teach pupils about the appropriate use of social media.
- Positively encourage pupils to comply with the school rules on mobile phone and internet use.
- Follow up and follow through with pupils who ignore the rules.
- Actively involve parents and/or the Parents' Association in awareness raising campaigns around social media.
- Actively promote the right of every member of the school community to be safe and secure in school.
- Highlight and explicitly teach school rules in pupil friendly language in the classroom and in common areas.
- All staff can actively watch out for signs of bullying behaviour.
- Ensure there is adequate playground/school yard/outdoor supervision.
- School staff can get pupils to help them to identify bullying "hot spots" and "hot times" for bullying in the school.
    - Hot spots tend to be in the playground/school yard/outdoor areas, changing rooms, corridors, and other areas of unstructured supervision.
    - Hot times again tend to be times where there is less structured supervision

such as when pupils are in the playground/school yard or moving classrooms.

- Support the establishment and work of student councils.